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The Shape of Things

✶

FOREIGN MINISTER HIROTA COULD SCARCELY have been more frank in stating the ultimate aims of the Japanese militarists than he was last week in his speech before the Diet. Defining Chinese cooperation with Japan as meaning that "China must take Japan's side against Russia," Hirota also indicated that Japan would no longer be satisfied with separating North China from the rest of the country but would demand for the whole of China a puppet government which would be subservient to Japanese policy. At the same time Finance Minister Kaya, reporting on plans to raise vast amounts of money, partly by increased taxes but primarily through bond issues, admitted that Japan was a long way from achieving its objectives. He indicated that special measures would be necessary to limit the expected rise in living costs. On the military front it is openly admitted that the change in Chinese tactics has brought increased difficulties to the invaders. Within the past week Chinese detachments carried the battle to the Pootung area on the outskirts of Shanghai and threatened to recapture Hangchow and Wuhu. Attempts by the Japanese to land troops on the island of Hainan, south of Canton, were beaten off with heavy losses. The main Japanese offensive at Shantung appears to have made little headway. Further difficulties have been reported by the Japanese detachments in Shansi and Suiyuan. As the area of the struggle broadens, the effectiveness of the Japanese attack notably diminishes, arousing hope that in the long run Japan may find the cost of subjugating China beyond its resources.

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THE TVA HAS COME OUT OF ITS BATTLES stronger than ever. It has, in the past few weeks, been the center of three major developments. The most dramatic was the decision of the three-judge Federal District Court that the TVA operations are constitutional. In its general reasoning the opinion follows the lines of Chief Justice Hughes's opinion in the Ashwander case two years ago. But it carries the logic one step farther and sanctions TVA competition with privately owned utilities in the sale of power. The resounding government victory is undoubtedly one of the reasons why Wendell L. Willkie is worried. One of the most skilful jobs Mr. Roosevelt has done in his press conferences was

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his point-by-point dissection of a memorandum submitted by Willkie setting down terms for a reconciliation of the government with the utilities. The terms included the permanent freezing of the top-holding-company structure, a definite limitation of the area of government competition, and a government commitment that reproduction cost would be guaranteed as a valuation base for the years up to 1932. None of these terms, of course, were possible. Their significance lies in their revelation of the whole attitude and temper of Mr. Willkie and his group. Our opinion of that attitude is in no degree changed by Mr. Willkie's subsequent offer to sell the utility system to the government. We disagree with Mr. Villard's opinion of this offer, stated on his page in this issue. Mr. Lilienthal's answer to Mr. Willkie, which had the President's support, is hard-headed and fair. To buy the system as a whole would be a clear way to saddle on the public the burden of the various write-ups in value that have occurred in the colorful history of the companies. Mr. Willkie's suggestion about procedure (incidentally it is difficult to think of the Supreme Court appointing a member of the commission) does not change the basis of negotiations. The only valid basis can be the physical and operating value of the companies. Moreover, there is no reason for contemplating federal ownership of the utilities now. There may have been twenty years ago, but since then the TVA and the movement for municipal power plants have indicated a better method. That is the yardstick and the acquisition by municipalities of particular power plants where duplication is threatened.

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BENJAMIN STOLBERG IS NOT IN THE PAY OF Girdler or Hague or Henry Ford. He is honestly concerned about the working class and its major effort to create militant, effective organizations for collective bargaining. He believes in the C. I. O. These things we know to be true because Mr. Stolberg was for many years a contributor to *The Nation,* and we published several articles by him on vigilantism and labor as recently as last August. For that reason we particularly regret the appearance of his series of articles in the Scripps-Howard newspapers on factionalism in the C. I. O. We do not at this point wish to go into the question of Mr. Stolberg's facts concerning the efforts of the Communist Party to control as far as it can the unions in which its members are active. What disturbs us is the method employed by Mr. Stolberg. He has focused on one phase of the C. I. O.'s development as if it were the whole story of labor's swift rise toward power. He has mistaken a tide-rip for the incoming tide. No tributes to the growth of the C. I. O., no pleasant pen-portraits of some of its leaders can alter the distorted effect of the series. It is not that Mr. Stolberg loves labor less but that he hates the Communists more; and the product of his hate will be of better use to the gentlemen named in the first sentence of this paragraph than to John L. Lewis or Homer Martin. Happily the C. I. O. shows every sign of being able to survive its friends as well as its enemies.

IN SUCCEEDING HIMSELF CHAUTEMPS HAS not given France either a new or a lasting government. His return to office amounts to little more than the usual consent of a retiring minister to carry on the business of the state till his successor can be found. The absence of the Socialists from the council of ministers and the exchange of Tweedledee Marchandeau for Tweedledum Bonnet, have altered nothing unless it is for the worse. All the profound divisions, all the grave problems—financial, social, political, and diplomatic—which originally precipitated the crisis remain and cannot but go on aggravating themselves. Big business, against whose domination and against whose flirtations with totalitarianism the Popular Front was formed, has triumphed in compassing the break-up of that coalition; and nothing can be more doubtful than Chautemps's skill and will to cope with the powerful foes of social reform whom a united left has failed to bring to terms.

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AMERICAN REPORTING OF THE FRENCH crisis leaves much to be desired. The inaccuracies, distortions, and downright misrepresentations of P. J. Philip, Paris correspondent for the New York *Times,* are particularly shocking. Space forbids our citing Mr. Philip at delectable length, but we cannot forgo a few instances. To believe him, M. Bonnet—"that courageous young man"—is a political party all by himself; it was Bonnet and not Blum who, at the risk of being abandoned by the Communists, had secured the tripartite monetary alignment; Bonnet's failure to form a Cabinet was due solely to the wicked Marxists and not at all to the opposition to him within his own party or to his second, tacit, devaluation of the franc; Flandin and Reynaud belong to the "central" Left Republican Party instead of being the leaders of the Democratic Alliance; Blum laid himself open to charges of treason for the crime of attempting to enlarge the Popular Front by drawing the center groups into the majority; and Louis Marin, political partner of the fascist Doriot, is a "stern defender of republican liberty in the widest sense."

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THE CONVICTION OF SIXTEEN OIL COMPANIES by the federal grand jury at Madison is welcome if only to show that legal processes are not wholly futile in the fight against monopoly action and business price-fixing. We say this even though we are skeptical of anti-trust enforcement as the principal method for the regulation of business. There can be little doubt that the oil companies had a strong defense. They had been taught by Mr. Ickes's oil administration in the NRA days to fight the hot-oil companies and stabilize prices. They learned their lesson all too well, and after the Supreme Court invalidated oil control they continued price-fixing in their own interest. The jury's verdict cuts across the legal technicalities and expresses the attitude of twelve farmers and small business men toward the big monopolies. It is a good verdict, even if the path of control in the oil industry still remains to be explored. As for the gen-

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eral outlook for monopoly control, it is growing clear that the Administration program will have hard going. We have on the statute books a model law for the treatment of public-utility holding companies. The Treasury is likely to sponsor legislation aimed at holding companies in the banking field, where the concentration of power is as bad as in the utilities. And similar legislation, sponsored by Mr. Eastman, will be introduced by Senator Wheeler with respect to railroad holding companies. The government's position is sound, and a lively fight is to be expected.

*

OCTAVIAN GOGA, RUMANIA'S NEW PREMIER, has demonstrated that he yields to no one when it comes to effective anti-Semitism or flagrant disregard for legal formalities. One of his first acts in preparation for the elections called for March 2 has been to issue a decree compelling all Jews to establish their citizenship. Under this decree the 500,000 Jews living in provinces acquired from Austria-Hungary will be required to submit documentary evidence showing that they had residence and paid taxes prior to 1918. Those failing to satisfy the local magistrate with official proofs, in many cases almost impossible to obtain within the time limit, if at all, will be struck from the rolls and held liable to ejection from the country. Somewhat more ingenious was the announcement that the traditional party emblems would be discarded at the election in favor of a system by which the parties will be designated by a number of dots. The Goga party will be represented by one dot—similar to the traditional symbol of Maniu's National Peasant Party—while other parties will be confusingly identified by rows of dots numbering as high as twenty-eight. Should Goga be successful in obtaining support of 40 per cent of the electorate through such trickery, combined with wholesale intimidation, more sweeping anti-Semitic measures will assuredly follow. But it is not at all certain that he will even approach this figure. All the opposition parties, including Codreanu's fascist Iron Guard and the reactionary Liberal Party, have joined in an electoral pact to fight against terrorism and corruption in the forthcoming election—and these parties together polled over 90 per cent of the vote last December.

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IN SPAIN'S REBEL TERRITORY, WHERE SO many biased witnesses have found "law and order" on the surface, the first big setback to the rebel arms might be expected to have had little or no effect. Yet in reality the disaffection behind the lines caused by the defeat at Teruel was so great that the Generalissimo felt forced to throw in his whole army to retake a small town which has much less strategic importance for him than for the Loyalists. Franco's Nazi staff officers, we learn, counseled against the violent rebel counter-offensive at Teruel on the grounds that it would interfere with the projected attacks on Guadalajara and Almeria and in addition seriously deplete the insurgents' reserves of men and equipment. But Franco swept aside these military considerations because be believed that the low morale behind his lines could not stand a defeat. Even if Teruel falls to the rebels, the price paid can hardly be worth the military gain, and the play for morale is so obvious as to defeat its purpose. For the trouble runs deep. Acts of sabotage multiply in rebel territory. Even Mr. Carney is forced to describe them in the New York *Times*. Moreover, the number of desertions to the government lines and to Gibraltar have increased. It is interesting to note that Queipo de Llano, the broadcasting drunken general of Seville, announced the capture of Teruel by the Loyalists while Franco's radio at Salamanca suppressed the news. And to make matters perfect for Franco, Queipo has now taken to broadcasting barbed insinuations about his Generalissimo's Italian allies.

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RECENT UTTERANCES FROM THE VATICAN condemning anti-Christian aspects of the Hitler regime should fool no one into regarding the Holy See as a foe of fascism. The heiling pagans may be in bad odor for their Wotan-worshiping and priest-baiting but the cordiality between the Vatican and Mussolini grows more sugary by the month. Relations between these two resolved themselves into a mutual-admiration ceremony last week when Mussolini received a group of 60 bishops and archbishops and 2,000 priests who had distinguished themselves in the national campaign to attain self-sufficiency in the wheat crop. "The clergy of the fatherland's autarchic front is at the disposition of Il Duce," said Abbe Menossi on behalf of the assembled priests. And the more poetic Archbishop Nogara of Udine exclaimed: "Duce, you have won so many battles, may the Lord assist you and enable you to win all those you undertake with your energy and knowledge, for the grandeur, prosperity, and glory of Christian Italy and of Rome, center of Christianity and Imperial Capital." For his part Mussolini thanked the men of God for their collaboration in the struggle against the "Abyssinian hordes" and the "highly civilized hordes of sanctionism." Vatican circles, while careful to disavow any direct connection with the affair, unofficially praised it as "opportune and satisfactory," and the Pope himself received the same delegation two days later. "Hordes of democracy" please note.

*

JAMES H. R. CROMWELL FLEW ALL THE WAY from Honolulu to lay a plan in the House Ways and Means Committee. His plan is simple and has two parts. First you repeal the income tax and then you substitute a sales tax—on everything, including food, clothing, and medicine. Some quick-figuring committeemen estimated that on a federal basis it would mean a sales tax of 18 per cent on everything, and that if Mr. Cromwell's theory were extended to states and municipalities, the levy would be increased to 72 per cent, but Mr. Cromwell was not daunted. On the contrary, he said it would increase labor's bargaining power and would not put an undue burden on the poor. Presumably his plan would

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send so much money pouring into industry that workers would soon be able to demand such high salaries that they would shortly be riding around in sixteen cylinder Millenniums and spending their vacations with Mr. Cromwell and Doris Duke in Honolulu. Mr. Cromwell failed to say what Mrs. Automobile Worker Smith and Mrs. Steel Roller Poletti would be using to pay the 72 or even the 18 per cent sales tax on the family's bread between times. But perhaps that dilemma would produce a shortage of workers through starvation that would raise to even greater heights the bargaining power of those who were left. "It sounds," remarked Mr. Doughton of the House Ways and Means Committee, "like you are trying to bring the millennium. But I can tell you right now that it won't work." After Mr. Cromwell's dramatic appearance, the committee presumably went back to work. Which suggests that a sales tax of 100 per cent on sales talks by millionaire saviors might save a lot of wear and tear on Congressional committees.

The Fourth Phase

THE solemn filing of business leaders through the White House portals is in itself neither sinister nor encouraging. If Franklin D. Roosevelt wants to dress himself up in the starched collar and schoolboy tie of Herbert Hoover and receive the instruction of the Old Masters of finance, he has the right to do so. Our fear is that he will not greatly be the gainer in wisdom. But it is much better that he should get his advice directly from the sort of advisory council that is now being mooted than that business should fill the entire press with its clamor in order to get itself heard

It is less likely, however, that Mr. Roosevelt is panting for advice than that he is moved by considerations of political discretion. He is anxious to give the appearance of having taken every possible step and consulted everyone in his attempts to cope with the depression. For his eye is at the present moment mainly upon Congress. The filibuster has, in a curious way, served his purposes, for it has given him a chance to mark time and find his bearings. His primary concern at present is not with a legislative program but with morale. His alternate bows to left and right are meant chiefly to keep an organized opposition from developing within his party. It is significant that the President's whole policy of blowing hot and cold—of attacking holding companies, monopolies, and absentee ownership in the abstract while extending an olive branch to business men in the concrete—is one well-calculated to appeal to men of Mr. Garner's stamp, who will have the decisive voice on party cohesion.

The New Deal is entering on a critical period which may determine whether what it has accomplished thus far is to be consolidated or dissolved. Mr. Roosevelt confronts the fourth phase of his administration. The first was the period of emergency legislation—of "action and action now"—including not only the measures taken to meet the 1933 panic but also such measures of uncritical immediacy as the NRA. The second was the laying down of the permanent program, the long-run New Deal, with the Labor Relations Act, the SEC, the farm program, and the TVA as its principal elements. The third was the phase of political adventure and counter-attack, including the President's court plan, the Black episode, and the concerted drive on the principal New Deal agencies. The business setback rounded out this period and accomplished what the President's mistakes and the big battalions of the opposition had been unable to accomplish—it definitely stopped the farther advance of the New Deal.

The fourth phase will in all likelihood extend over the remaining three years of Mr. Roosevelt's term. It presents the problem of fashioning a policy which will at once halt a depression, heal a party breach, win an election, and continue a social program. Obviously such a task has its contradictions, if not its impossibilities. And Mr. Roosevelt's moves of the past few months must be taken as maneuvers toward a solution of these multiple difficulties. Time may prove their wisdom, but thus far they give us mainly the impression of a psychologist's mouse trapped in a maze.

The comments which the President jotted down as the members of Secretary Roper's Business Advisory Council read their statement to him, and which were published in a sort of antiphonal form along with their statement, do not constitute a program. They may perhaps be described as indicating a mood of restrained compromise on both sides. The President has discovered that his anti-monopoly campaign, regardless of whether it is economically valid, was doomed politically from the start. No capitalist regime can move against the very essence of capitalism without endangering the sources of its own support. Even the members of the advisory council who had previously been friendly to the President are reported to have been in revolt because of the Jackson and Ickes speeches, and ready for mass resignation. Nor does it take much acumen to see that some of Mr. Roosevelt's own supporters are themselves industrialists who enjoy incomes and power from monopolies. A real drive to break the power of the holding companies and the undemocratic control that the big banking interests have over industry can only be undertaken by an Administration that is ready to burn the bridges that link it with capitalist power. And the President, faced by a depression, a revolt, and an election, decided to let the bridges stand for the event of retreat.

His present strategy seems to revolve around new forms for exercising control over business while granting it a voice in that control. The basic question is of course how much of a voice that will mean. The general idea of an advisory group that will have a role in the shaping of economic policy is a promising one. The great danger is that it may become what the NRA was—another trap for cartelizing industry, strengthening monopoly, and penalizing the consumer. But it need not be that. A policy-shaping group that was truly representative of all the interests involved in industry—labor, the consumer,

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the investor, management, and technology, as well as the financial groups—might well develop into a useful instrument. But its real purpose should not be to determine government policy—ultimately the Executive and Congress cannot absolve themselves of that responsibility—but to coordinate business policies. If it addressed itself to that purpose it could become the nucleus of an economic planning body. In the end America will find that it cannot escape the necessity of reaching its economic decisions nationally instead of leaving them to the hazards of corporate power or of piecemeal governmental action. That will, we hope, be the direction of the Administration's fourth phase.

Policies on Japan

IN THE six months that have passed since the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese conflict the outlines of the Administration's policy have become fairly apparent. It is essentially the traditional policy of a capitalist country which finds its interests menaced by a rival power. The Administration has attempted as far as possible to protect its interests in China, but has retreated on occasion rather than run the risk of becoming embroiled in war. In the Brussels conference it flirted with the possibility of international cooperation, but refused to assume the leadership that was necessary to make such collaboration a success. With the failure of the Brussels conference it has fallen back on an old-fashioned imperialist policy based on naval preparedness.

In some quarters this policy has been represented as a middle-of-the-road path between the program advocated by a vociferous minority of isolationists and the somewhat less vocal demands of the advocates of collective security, the assumption being that the middle course is probably the safest. This is essentially a false picture of the situation. The present program is in no sense a compromise between isolationism and collective security. It is a distinct policy, based on certain assumptions and representing a definite philosophy, and is probably the most dangerous of any course which the United States could pursue.

Faced by the reality of Japanese expansion in China, the isolationists would avoid a conflict by giving way to Japan. They would repatriate all American citizens in the war zone, withdraw our military and naval forces, curtail economic relations with both belligerents by invoking the Neutrality Act, and ease world tension by economic concessions to the aggressor nations. The weakness of this policy lies in its complete lack of realism. Our stakes in the Far East may not be great as compared with our national wealth, but the holders of these stakes—among them are such companies as the National City Bank, the International Telephone and Telegraph Company, and the Socony-Vacuum Oil Company—are far too powerful to permit withdrawal. Moreover, given the temper of the present leaders of Japan, concessions by the United States would certainly be interpreted as a sign of weakness and would lead to an intensification of Japanese aggression, with increased danger of war to this country. American withdrawal would also destroy any possibility of cooperation among the powers, since such action can only be obtained on the basis of existing rights and treaties. Abandonment of these treaties under duress would place this country in a position where it must accept at least partial responsibility for the disintegration of international law.

It is doubtful, however, whether the program advocated by the extreme isolationists is as immediately dangerous as that being followed by the Administration. Unable to withdraw and unwilling to cooperate in collective measures, it is attempting to play a lone hand in opposing Japanese expansion in China. It is compelled to rely largely on guesswork in its day-to-day actions to decide how far it can go without involving the country in an unwanted war. And in order to strengthen its hand, it naturally seeks a navy and air force second to none.

While it is fantastic to suggest that Japan, with a million soldiers bogged down in China, would voluntarily declare war against the United States, wars do not always develop logically. In any case the United States is running a far greater risk acting alone than if it were acting in concert with the other great powers. But the most alarming aspect of the Administration's program is to be found in its reliance on military preparedness. If history has demonstrated anything, it is that a country which prepares for offensive war ultimately engages in such a war. It bespeaks a reliance on armed force as an instrument of national policy which precludes the possibility of developing an alternative technique for dealing with international problems. As a concession to nationalist sentiment, it tends to make joint action all the more difficult.

It cannot be denied that collective action involves necessary compromises with the ideal. Radical isolationists have made much of the fact that British and French hands are not much cleaner than those of the Japanese, and suggest that cooperation to check Japan would merely support one imperialism against another. This is equivalent to saying that there is no difference between peaceful economic penetration and the holocaust perpetrated by Japan in China. Undoubtedly there are dangers in becoming involved in the struggle between imperialisms, as there are in any effort to enforce law. But the dangers of joint action are infinitely less than those inherent in the Administration's unilateral policy, and in the present crisis are almost wholly imaginary.

It is only fair to ask whether any practical possibility of collective action in support of international law exists at the present moment. Admittedly the possibility is slight. On the basis of past experience, each of the powers is certain that it would not be whole-heartedly supported by the others. The greatest skepticism exists with regard to the United States, since it was the refusal of this country to cooperate that was chiefly responsible for the failure of the League in 1931 and again in 1935. But at the same time it is becoming increasingly obvious that Japan must not be allowed to triumph. Inaction and unilateral

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action have proved equally unsatisfactory. Collective action is all that remains.

The proposal for international embargos against Japan submitted by Sir Walter Citrine, general secretary of the British Trade Union Congress, to the American Federation of Labor is an indication that the demand for collective action is far from dead among the mass of people. With the meeting of the League Council on January 26 pressure will once more be exerted by the British Labor Party and other anti-war groups for sanctions against Japan. This move will fail unless some definite assurance is forthcoming from the United States that this country will cooperate. But it is safe to say that if the United States, which with the British Empire controls more than half of Japan's trade, were willing to join in imposing embargos on Japan, the League powers would gladly come along. If this seems like a counsel of perfection, it is because the average American has not yet grasped the fact that Japan, because of its high degree of economic vulnerability, can be stopped in relatively short order by collective economic pressure, whether applied by governments or by individual consumers. Nor is it realized that if Japan can be stopped, the danger of a fascist-provoked world war will be materially lessened.

Financial Horse-Trading

THE announcement that Mexico has increased its tariff on a long list of imports from the United States has created serious concern among persons who advocate low tariffs for all countries except the United States. Frank L. Kluckhohn, Mexican correspondent for the New York *Times*, implies that the move is the result of growing Nazi influence south of the Rio Grande. That the move will be injurious to American exporters without necessarily aiding the Mexican economy goes almost without saying, but it is hardly realistic to see a German plot in Mexico's rather pathetic efforts to free itself from the financial domination of American capital. The fact that the United States normally supplies 63 per cent of Mexico's imports is perhaps the best indication of the extent of that control.

This subordination was clearly in evidence on the occasion of the recent visit of Finance Minister Eduardo Suárez to Washington and New York, the results of which have been to guarantee the stability of the Mexican peso and the continued purchase of Mexican silver by the American Treasury Department. Mr. Suárez, unlike many of his less fortunate predecessors, went home with a pact superficially, at least, more favorable to his country than has usually been the case in these periodic consultations with the financial overlords.

Was this happy denouement a new triumph of the good-neighbor policy over old-fashioned imperialist bullying? Such is the impression assiduously being fostered in official circles in both countries. But a closer examination of the deal, which must be made in the light of the realities of American economic domination of Mexico, reveals certain flaws in the arrangement. Approximately 75 per cent of the country's silver mines are owned by American companies, and if this country ceased to take their product, American interests would probably suffer more harm than those of Mexico.

The other half of the pact has an equally hard-headed purpose. The stability of the peso with relation to the dollar, to which it has been pegged since 1934, is vital to the United States. Foreign companies in Mexico engaged in the extraction and exportation of raw materials are naturally interested in a cheap peso, for they pay wages and other operating expenses in Mexican currency and sell their products in dollars. But this is only one aspect of the imperialist picture. American exporters, whose trade with Mexico, particularly in machinery and other capital goods, has been steadily increasing since the Mexican revival of the past few years, want a dear peso in order to maintain their present favorable position as well as to compete with the expanding German penetration of the Mexican market.

The experience of the past few years has shown that the existing exchange rate of 3.60 pesos to the dollar represents a rough equilibrium between these conflicting interests. However, the recent decline in the American price level was tending to drive the peso down in relation to the dollar, and had this process been allowed to continue, a new rate of 4 or perhaps even 4.50 pesos to the dollar, would certainly have been established, with ill effects on the American export trade as well as on the Mexican standard of living. The latter point is important as it must inevitably have produced a new wave of strikes which would have hampered the production of minerals and other raw materials vital to the armaments race.

In these circumstances it proved ordinary business common sense to protect the peso against fluctuation. There is reason to believe that the rate can be held at a fixed point with relative ease owing to its independence of the ordinary influences in the balance of trade between the two countries. Mexico's permanently "favorable" balance, which ought theoretically to produce a high exchange rate, is largely fictitious. Although Mexican imports average only about 65 per cent of its exports, the apparent balance is in reality exported from the country annually in the form of the profits of the foreign monopoly enterprises which control Mexico's oil, mining, and other industries. This condition is partially compensated by the dollars left in Mexico by American tourists, but the volume of the tourist business is insufficient to exert a marked influence on the value of the peso. Thus by keeping the peso pegged permanently to the dollar the United States gains an advantage over other countries.

It is clear that in the temporary emergency, and from a strictly capitalist point of view, Mexico has had certain advantages despite an inherently weak position. For the moment the most important question is whether the Mexican government has been adroit enough fully to exploit this momentarily privileged position or whether Finance Minister Suárez was obliged to make excessive concessions in the preliminary horse-trading.

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Jackson versus Richberg

BY MARQUIS CHILDS

Washington, January 24

THE nomination of Robert H. Jackson as Solicitor General may touch off a quarrel that has been brewing here for a long time. This dispute, which has sharply divided lefts and rights within the Administration, has as its focus the Department of Justice. But it involves more or less directly future policies for the next two years and perhaps a great deal more than that. Mr. Jackson, who is Assistant Attorney General in charge of the anti-trust division, went a long way in his anti-monopoly speeches a month ago. It is inconceivable, of course, that he should have made such important utterances without the approval of the White House. But beyond doubt the initiative was his. He believes ardently in the objectives of the New Deal, and all through the fall he watched with something like despair while the gains of recent years crumbled away.

But at the same time that Mr. Jackson was inveighing against monopoly control of business Mr. Roosevelt was listening to another philosophy. From subtle persuaders he was hearing that business could not be revived under the threat of anti-trust prosecution; that only through some plan of industrial self-regulation could the present ominous trend be reversed. Foremost among these persuaders was Donald R. Richberg. As a private practitioner of the law in Washington, the former head of the NRA has attracted an imposing list of clients, including some of the largest corporations in the country. The line of reasoning that Mr. Richberg has taken with the President is resourceful. The whole nature of industry has completely changed in the past twenty years, he says. It is ridiculous to think that you can apply the anti-trust laws of another era to business today. To do so will only result in hopeless confusion and a deepening of the depression. Very cautiously, insisting that it has nothing to do with the old NRA, he approaches the general outline of a plan for self-regulation. Under such a plan industrialists would be able, with the blessing of an administrative commission to be set up outside the Department of Justice or the Federal Trade Commission, to allocate production and otherwise get around the anti-trust laws. They would be subject merely to civil and not to criminal anti-trust prosecution. This is the general idea that has been under discussion with business leaders and others at the White House.

In all this, of course, there is nothing surprising. What is surprising is that Mr. Roosevelt's Attorney General, Homer S. Cummings, is more or less in sympathy with the Richberg proposal. He is definitely not in sympathy with the opinions expressed by his assistant, Mr. Jackson. In fact, to callers he has made no secret of his annoyance and pain over Mr. Jackson's recent speeches. This difference between Mr. Cummings and the head of his anti-trust division is made even more interesting by an illuminating bit of background that involves all the principals. A month ago, while the anti-trust division was seeking a criminal indictment in federal court in Milwaukee against the big motor corporations and the companies that do their financing, the Department of Justice initiated in Washington an effort to obtain a consent decree in the case. This so angered Federal Judge Geiger that he proceeded to dismiss the grand jury, whereupon Attorney General Cummings in a letter to the House Judiciary Committee requested an investigation of Geiger's court.

While he has said nothing publicly, it is reported in Washington that Mr. Jackson was opposed to the attempt to obtain a consent decree at the same time that the case was being held before a grand jury. It happens that Mr. Richberg was counsel for two of the finance companies and two of the motor corporations, Ford and Chrysler, named in the suit. He makes no secret of his indignation at the effort to obtain criminal indictments against his clients. It is, he says, an example of what happens when business tries to plan. The motor companies were trying to reduce carrying charges and eliminate the loan sharks, and along comes the federal government with a big stick to tell them they're crooks. In his discussions with the President and the industrialists whom he has brought to the White House, Mr. Richberg has in all probability used this case as an example, for he feels very strongly about it.

Among the President's more leftish advisers there is consternation at the ease with which Mr. Richberg goes and comes at the White House. They say that he takes his clients in and out of the President's study and argues the case there. Beneath their resentment of Mr. Richberg is a very real concern that he may have persuaded Mr. Roosevelt to adopt the idea of industrial self-regulation. At his press conference last Friday the President talked about the ultimate necessity for business and labor to sit down and plan; no legislation would be required for this cooperative endeavor. It was very vague, but behind the generalizations one could discern faintly the shadow of Mr. Richberg's plan.

More than this immediate issue is likely to be involved in Mr. Jackson's confirmation. While conservative Democrats such as Senator Bailey of North Carolina are prepared to make a field day over Jackson's name, others in the Senate will take the opportunity to assail the present Attorney General's conduct of the Department of Justice. One of these is Senator Borah of Idaho, long-time foe of monopoly. The senior Senator from Idaho was incensed over the department's handling of the case

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against the motor finance companies. But his indignation does not stop there. Along with almost everyone else in Washington he has heard the reports of the laxness with which important matters are treated in the Department of Justice. These reports chiefly concern the way in which political lawyers have access to the Attorney General and the frequency with which they appear as representatives of large corporations having business with the department. The conspicuous example is J. Bruce Kremer, former Democratic national committeeman from Montana. One of the favorite topics of Washington speculation is the extent of Mr. Kremer's law practice.

When the President was in the West last fall, he stopped in Idaho to have a long talk with the first citizen of that state. The subject of their conversation, it is scarcely necessary to add, was monopoly and what to do about it. Concluding their talk, the President declared himself in complete agreement with the Senator from Idaho. For several months Mr. Borah has waited for some tangible move to be made in the drive against monopoly control and concentration. Now his patience has come to an end. He wants action, and if it is not forthcoming he will make a noise. One of the difficulties, of course, is that there has been no agreement on a program. The task of breaking down monopoly concentration appears at this stage so formidable that it is difficult for the New Dealers to see any approach. The decision of the jury at Madison, Wisconsin, finding the oil companies guilty of monopoly price-fixing was encouraging, particularly since the anti-trust division had been none too optimistic about the outcome of this suit. Nevertheless, it remains true that anti-monopolists in the Administration have not come to an agreement on any attack. And, by contrast, Mr. Richberg is perfectly sure of what must be done.

Those in the Administration who are most apprehensive that the President will approve some plan which will allow business to circumvent the anti-trust laws were opposed to Mr. Jackson leaving his present place at the head of the anti-trust division. It was Mr. Jackson's chief, Mr. Cummings, who recommended that he be rewarded for his labors by elevation to the post of Solicitor General, left vacant when Stanley Reed was named to the Supreme Court. What it amounts to is another move up on the political escalator, with the New York governorship on the next landing, and after that perhaps the Presidency.

If all goes smoothly and the threatened quarrel in the Senate fails to materialize or dwindles into a mild flurry of oratory, then all will be quiet in the Department of Justice. The left wingers have their own candidate to succeed Mr. Jackson, but they have no real hope that he will be chosen. While he will nominally remain in the department, Mr. Jackson will be so absorbed with his duties as Solicitor General that he will have little time to give to anti-trust policies. The prospect for the moment, therefore, is not a cheerful one for those who want Mr. Roosevelt to go after monopoly concentration. It is a fairly safe bet, however, that if the facts about the Department of Justice do not come out at this time, they will come out at a later date, and they will look no better for having aged.

Spiking Japan's Guns

BY T. A. BISSON

ACROSS the field of Japanese conquest in North China falls the shadow of the Eighth Route Army. This force is commanded by leaders whose names became a legendary byword in the Chinese countryside during their ten years of warfare with the Nanking government. The healing of the split between these bitter opponents in the late spring of 1937 symbolized China's determination to present a united front to the invader. It was the climax of a rapid sweep toward political unification. Within a single year the Kwangtung armies, the able leaders of Kwangsi province, the northeastern troops of General Chang Hsueh-liang, and the motley forces of Szechuan province had successively accepted the centralized military control of the Nanking authorities. For the first time since the establishment of the Chinese Republic in 1911, national unity was emerging from the mists of unreality into the realm of fact. It came none too soon. The last details of the Kuomintang-Communist rapprochement were still being worked out when Japan's war machine launched the most determined and ruthless of its long series of unjustifiable aggressions in China.

Before Japan's full forces had been landed in North China, the Eighth Route Army had become an integral part of the Chinese national forces and had established complete liaison with the central military authorities at Nanking. Its divisions of seasoned regulars, roughly 100,000 strong, had been transferred to the mountainous regions of northern Shansi, the strategic center of North China. All observers, both Chinese and foreign, testify that the stiffest resistance encountered by the Japanese expeditionary forces in the five northern provinces was in the area lying between Tatung and Taiyuan in northern Shansi. This statement is not intended to belittle the morale or fighting ability of the other Chinese armies which participated in the North China campaign. The odds against these troops, especially when they operated in the open plain, were too great to be overcome.

For the Japanese push south of Peiping and Tientsin in Hopei province, which began on September 10, the invaders mobilized some 300,000 troops and lavishly

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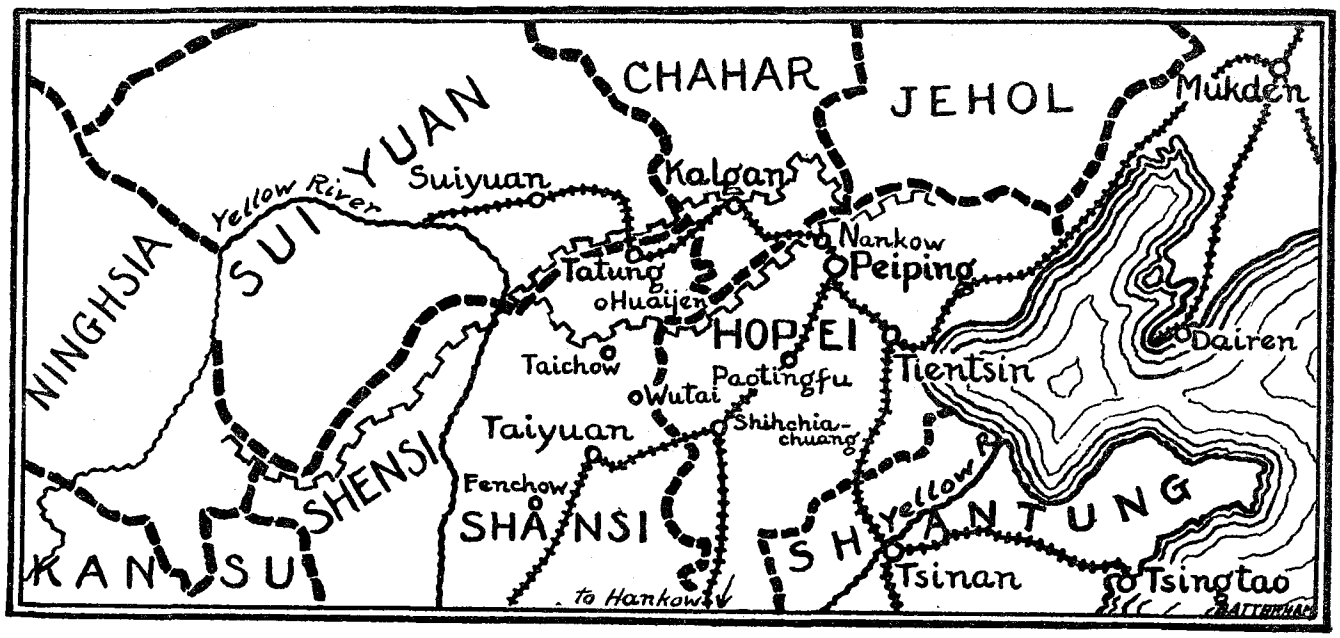
supplied them with mechanical equipment, including more than 100 bombing and pursuit planes. A month was spent in preparations for the drive. In early September, while traveling from Tientsin to Peiping, I watched Japanese munition and food trains being unloaded at the intermediate stations and their stocks added to the mountainous piles of crates, boxes, bags, and baskets of all kinds stacked along the platforms. Against the weight of such an offensive, backed by methodical preparation for every eventuality, even the best Chinese force would have been at a hopeless disadvantage. As it was, the Chinese commanders on this front made no effort to overcome their mechanical inferiority by resort to mobile warfare or attacks on the Japanese lines of communication. The intrenched armies, lacking adequate artillery and without a single war plane, waited almost fatalistically for the attack. When it came, the center of the Chinese front collapsed and both wings were rolled up. Blasted from their prepared positions and mercilessly bombed during their retreat, the fleeing troops were never able to consolidate their secondary defense lines. By mid-October the Japanese army had moved past Paotingfu and occupied Shihchiachuang, junction of a railway line running west into Shansi province from the Peiping-Hankow Railway. The occupation of this strategic junction point later proved of inestimable value to the hard-pressed Japanese forces in northern Shansi.

In this province the scheduled plan of Japanese operations was rudely upset by the desperate resistance of the Eighth Route Army. The details of the campaign, which was covered by none of the foreign correspondents, were virtually unreported during October, in which month some of the severest engagements were fought along the passes through the mountain barrier. Not until December did the correspondents in Peiping begin to piece together, from reports of missionaries and information gathered by the foreign military attachés, the full story of these operations.

Japanese forces entering the northern provinces from Manchuria had gained control of Kalgan, capital of Chahar, in August, after two weeks of severe fighting at Nankow Pass. Advancing southwest along the Peiping-Suiyuan Railway, they had then entered Shansi and occupied the important city of Tatung. By the middle of September they had left the railway and taken Huaijen, some fifty miles farther south. The mountain passes along the Great Wall in northern Shansi were before them.

Here the Japanese troops were split into three or four columns which attempted to force their way southward through the passes, of which Pinghsiangkuan, Juyuehkou, and Yenmenkuan were the most important. Sections of the Eighth Route Army had taken a position in all these passes. Early in October the former Communist forces isolated a full division of Japanese troops in a narrow defile at Pinghsiangkuan, the easternmost pass, and cut them to pieces. At about the same time, however, another invading column broke through at Juyuehkou and debouched into more open country at Fanchih and Taichow. Large Japanese reinforcements also increased the pressure at Pinghsiangkuan and finally forced the pass, whereupon a considerable portion of the Eighth Army fell back to Wutai and the Hsinkou range, covering the approach to Taiyuan. During these operations the Eighth Army leaders refused to be drawn into a positional battle in which they might have been destroyed by the bombing planes and superior artillery of the Japanese. The Japanese force which first broke through at Juyuehkou totaled about 50,000 troops; it was surrounded by overwhelmingly larger Chinese armies to the south of Taichow and for a time was in desperate straits. Even with the reinforcements which came to its support, bringing the combined Japanese forces to 100,000 or 150,000, it was unable to break the Chinese resistance which developed along the Hsinkou range. From the middle of October to the end of the first week in November the Japanese troops which had penetrated the northern passes were held up north of Taiyuan. Sections of the Eighth Route Army, still operating in the passes, completely disrupted the supply lines of the invaders and made it impossible



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for all except large and heavily mechanized detachments to advance south from Tatung.

But the occupation of Shihchiachuang by the main Japanese forces in mid-October provided the high command with a new line of advance into Shansi along the Chengtai Railway to Taiyuan. By the end of the first week in November a force detached from the army operating on this line was approaching the outskirts of Taiyuan. Thus taken from the rear, the Chinese defense along the Hsinkou range was compelled to fall back, and Japanese troops entered Taiyuan on November 9.

Weighing the results of the campaign, the Japanese army command could find little cause for self-congratulation. The task of conquering northern Shansi, originally intrusted to several relatively small Japanese columns, had eventually required an army of between 200,000 and 300,000 men. After the fall of Taiyuan a good portion of this force was required to hold the gains already achieved. There was no question of occupying more territory. At the beginning of December the city of Fenchow, distant only about eighty miles from Taiyuan on a good motor highway, was still held by Chinese troops. The Eighth Route Army ranged across the Japanese line of communications from Tatung to Taiyuan, rendering it useless as a supply line.

General Chu Teh, commander-in-chief of the Eighth Route Army, on the basis of these first clashes with Japan's war machine, formed certain preliminary judgments which reveal his coolly calculating temper. The Japanese, he remarked in an interview with a newspaper correspondent, had superior arms and used them well; they could act according to their plans and keep their plans secret; they did not surrender their guns but fought until killed, mainly because they feared death if taken captive; they could retreat and bring in reinforcements more quickly than the Chinese. On the other hand, the war spirit among the rank and file was low; the Japanese soldiers did not like to build defense works; they feared hand-to-hand battles; and their intelligence service worked slowly. He pointed out that most of the Japanese killed had fallen in hand-to-hand combat; hand grenades accounted for the second largest number. At Yenmenkuan on October 18 the Eighth Army had attacked the Japanese air field; using hand grenades it had destroyed twenty-one Japanese planes, leaving only three on the field before it retreated.

The severe losses inflicted on the Japanese army during this campaign, no less than the protracted character of the campaign and the number of troops required for the capture of Taiyuan, demonstrated the efficacy of the guerrilla warfare advocated by the Chinese Communist leaders. The formal conclusion of the campaign has left the Japanese command with a military problem scarcely less serious than the one it faced at the outset of its operations. Its chief opponent, the Eighth Route Army, by avoiding positional battles, has emerged virtually intact to continue the struggle. The Eighth Army's war base in the mountains of northern Shansi is the most important strategic area in the whole of North China. As long as the Chinese forces led by Chu Teh and his associates can operate in this region, the consolidation and pacification of Japan's conquests in the northern provinces will be a long-drawn-out and inconclusive affair, engaging the efforts of large and expensive armies of occupation. From northern Shansi the Eighth Route Army can send raiding detachments into the provinces of Suiyuan, Chahar, and Hopei to harry all the main Japanese lines of communication in these provinces. As already noted, the Japanese command has thus far been unable to establish a regular supply line from Tatung to Taiyuan. Recent dispatches indicate that serious guerrilla attacks have developed along the Chengtai Railway, running from Shihchiachuang to Taiyuan through the Niangtsekuan passes. In the middle of January a severe Japanese reverse at the hands of the Eighth Route Army was reported a few miles south of Taiyuan.

Of basic importance is the fact that the population of this whole area has been opened to the organizational efforts of the Eighth Army, which for the past ten years has been demonstrating the extraordinary military potentialities of the Chinese masses when properly led. Paradoxically, the Japanese invasion, which claims to be saving China from bolshevism, has enabled the Communist leaders to exercise their talents for making effective soldiers of workers and peasants in a larger area than they had ever dreamed of. Japanese excesses in the countryside, reported in Peiping by a succession of eyewitnesses, may be counted upon to win for the Eighth Army sympathy and support. Many observers felt that the Kuomintang-Communist agreement of last spring, which restricted the red forces to the comparatively poor Shensi-Kansu-Ninghsia districts, would eventually bring about the decline and disintegration of the Chinese Communist movement. Japan's invasion of North China has completely altered the situation. The Eighth Army has now a large and fertile field in which to foster its program and policies.

The extent to which its efforts have already achieved success is indicated by the testimony of missionaries and other foreign observers from the interior of Hopei province. North Shansi, by virtue of its geographical position, dominates the greater part of the Hopei plain south of Peiping. The mountain ranges extending from Shansi into western Hopei offer excellent cover for military forces entering this region, especially if they possess the confidence of the Chinese peasants. At the beginning of the war the Eighth Army leaders sent upward of 10,000 regulars into this area. This force later split up into numerous bands which, accompanied by experienced organizers, scattered across western Hopei with the object of establishing friendly contacts with the villagers. These units have been reorganizing remnants of defeated Chinese troops, collecting all available arms and ammunition, and organizing new peasant guerrilla forces. A recent estimate by Agnes Smedley places the total of new guerrilla detachments thus organized in Shansi, Hopei, and Suiyuan at 100,000. At present these detachments are poorly armed, but past experience suggests that the

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Eighth Army leaders may rapidly overcome this deficiency with captured Japanese equipment. Chu Teh declared in the interview referred to above that in many units only fifteen or twenty out of a hundred men possessed rifles, the rest being armed with hand grenades. On the leadership and morale of guerrilla troops depends much of their effectiveness. Chu Teh claimed that with all the hand-to-hand fighting of the Eighth Route Army the Japanese had not captured a man.

Eighth Army units in Hopei province are fighting as well as organizing. In Peiping during the last two weeks of November we heard of from sixteen to twenty attacks on Japanese detachments along the Peiping-Hankow Railway from Peiping to the Honan border. Only heavily armed Japanese detachments, usually escorted by airplanes, dared to venture into the interior of Hopei. Actual Japanese military control embraced but a narrow strip of approximately five miles on either side of the railway, with somewhat larger areas around the more important cities, such as Paotingfu. East of the Peiping-Hankow Railway the countryside was still controlled by remnants of the Chinese divisions which had been swept aside in the big September push. In this area at the beginning of December the Japanese command was still unable to utilize the highway from Tientsin to Paotingfu as a regular supply line. Current reports show raiding activities have extended to the outskirts of Peiping and Tientsin.

The facts thus briefly outlined do not mean that the Japanese military position in North China is untenable, or that Japan's armed forces are likely to be driven out of the northern provinces in the near future. They do mean that the Japanese command is faced with a military problem of large dimensions, which will continue to require an expensive army of occupation for many years to come. The "pacification" of North China, certainly of any considerable section of the interior, will not be accomplished unless the Eighth Route Army is completely annihilated. Failing this, from fifteen to twenty divisions of Japanese troops will be required to maintain control of the lines of railway communication in the northern provinces. And the problem may become steadily more serious if the Eighth Army is able to complete its organization of the peasants in the areas off the railway lines. The present guerrilla operations, it is important to note, are being carried on during the winter months, when the grain has been cut and cover is meager—a season when the armed Manchurian volunteers are normally driven into the most inaccessible areas of the northeastern provinces. The campaign, in other words, has got off to an early start. Consisting of an initial force of 100,000 troops seasoned by a decade of mobile warfare under the most difficult circumstances, and led by experienced commanders, the Eighth Army will almost certainly carry on a wasting conflict which will try Japanese nerves to the utmost. The Communist leaders are convinced that China, because of its semi-colonial status and backward technique, cannot defeat Japan by the orthodox methods of modern warfare. Chu Teh made this point to me, during an interview last June, in these succinct sentences: "China must depend on its peasant and worker strength if it is to fight Japan victoriously. For China this war must be a totalitarian war. Even all of our four hundred millions are not quite enough."

Laughter in Madrid

BY LANGSTON HUGHES

Madrid, December 15

THE thing about living in Madrid these days is that you never know when a shell is going to fall. Or where. Any time is firing time for Franco. Imagine yourself sitting calmly in the front room of your third-floor apartment carefully polishing your eyeglasses when all of a sudden, without the least warning, a shell decides to come through the wall—paying no attention to the open window—and explodes like a thunderclap beneath the sofa. If you are sitting on the sofa, you are out of luck. If you are at the other side of the room and good at dodging shrapnel you may not be killed. Maybe nobody will even be injured in your apartment. Perhaps the shell will simply go on through the floor and kill somebody else in apartment 27, downstairs. (People across the hall have been killed.)

Who next? Where? When? Today all the shells may fall in the Puerta del Sol. Tomorrow Franco's big guns on the hills outside Madrid may decide to change their range-finders and bombard the city fan-wise, sending *quince-y-medios* from one side of the town to the other. No matter in what section of the city you live, a shell may land in the kitchen of the sixth-floor apartment (whose inhabitants you've often passed on the stairs), penetrate several floors, and make its way to the street via your front room on the third floor.

That explains why practically nobody in Madrid bothers to move when the big guns are heard. If you move, you may as likely as not move into the wrong place. A few days ago four shells went through the walls of the Hotel Florida, making twenty that have fallen there. The entrance to the hotel is well protected with sandbags, but they couldn't sandbag nine stories. All this the desk clerk carefully explains to guests who wish to register. But most of the other hotels have been severely bombed, too. And one has to stay somewhere.

The Hotel Alfonso a few blocks away has several large holes through each of its four walls but is still receiving

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guests. One of the halls on an upper floor leads straight out into space—door and balcony have been shot away. In one of the unused bedrooms you can look slantingly down three floors into the street through the holes made by a shell that struck the roof and plowed its way down, then out by a side wall into the road. Walking up to your room, you pass a point where the marble stairs are splintered and the wall pitted by scraps of iron; here two people were killed. Yet the Hotel Alfonso maintains its staff, and those of its rooms that still have walls and windows are occupied by paying guests.

The now world-famous Telefonica, Madrid's riddled skyscraper in the center of the city, is still standing, proud but ragged, its telephone girls at work inside. The Madrid Post Office has no window-panes left whatsoever, but the mail still goes out. Around the Cibeles Fountain in front of the Post Office the street cars still pass, although the fountain itself with its lovely goddess is now concealed by a specially built housing of bricks and sandbags, so that the good-natured Madrileños have nicknamed it "Beauty Under Covers," laughing at their own wit.

Yes, people still laugh in Madrid. In this astonishing city of bravery and death, where the houses run right up to the trenches and some of the street-car lines stop only at the barricades, people still laugh, children play in the streets, and men buy comic papers as well as war news. The shell holes of the night before are often filled in by dawn, so efficient is the wrecking service and so valiantly do the Madrileños struggle to patch up their city.

A million people living on the front lines of a nation at war! The citizens of Madrid—what are they like? Not long ago a small shell fell in the study of a bearded professor of ancient languages. Frantically his wife and daughter came running to see if anything had happened to him. They found him standing in the center of the floor, holding the shell and shaking his head quizzically. "This little thing," he said, "this inanimate object, can't do us much damage. It's the philosophy that lies behind it, wife, the philosophy that lies behind it."

In the Arguelles quarter to the north, nearest to the rebel lines—the neighborhood that has suffered most from bombardments and air raids—many of the taller apartment houses, conspicuous targets that they are, have been abandoned. But in the smaller houses of one and two stories people still live and go about their tasks. The Cuban poet, Alejo Carpentier, told me that one morning after a heavy shelling he passed a house of which part of the front wall was lying in the yard. A shell had passed through the roof, torn away part of the wall, carried with it the top of the family piano, and buried itself in the garden. Nevertheless, there at the piano sat the young daughter of the house, very clean and starched, her hair brushed and braided, her face shining. Diligently she was beating out a little waltz from a music book in front of her. The fact that the top of the piano had been shot away in the night did not seem to affect the chords. When passers-by asked about it, calling through the shell hole, the child said, "Yes, an *obús* came right through here last night. I'm going to help clean up the yard after a while, but I have to practice my lessons now. My music teacher'll be here at eleven."

The will to live and laugh in Madrid is the thing that constantly amazes a stranger. At the house where I am staying, sometimes a meal consists largely of bread and of soup made with bread. Everybody tightens his belt and grins, and somebody is sure to repeat good-naturedly an old Spanish saying, "Bread with bread—food for fools!" Then we all laugh.

One of Franco's ways of getting back at Madrid is to broadcast daily from his radio stations at Burgos and Seville the luncheon and dinner menus of the big hotels, the fine food that the Fascists are eating and the excellent wines they drink. (Rioja and the best of wine areas are in Fascist hands.) But Madrid has ways of getting even with the Fascists, too. Mola, a lover of cafes, said at the very beginning of the war that he would soon be drinking coffee in Madrid. He was mistaken. Then he said he would enter Madrid by the first of November. He didn't. Then he swore he would enter the city on the eighth of December. He didn't. But on the evening of the eighth some wag remembered, and the crowds passing that night in Madrid's darkened Puerta del Sol saw by moonlight in the very center of the square a coffee table, carefully set, the coffee poured, and neatly pinned to the white cloth a large sign reading "For Mola."

Bread and coffee are scarce in Madrid, and so are cigarettes. The only cigarettes offered for sale more or less regularly are small, hard, and very bad. They are so bad that though they cost thirty centimos before the war they bring only twenty now despite their comparative scarcity. The soldiers call them "recruit-killers," jocularly asserting that they are as dangerous to the new men in the army as are bombs and bullets.

Bad cigarettes, poor wine, little bread, no soap, no sugar! Madrid, dressed in bravery and laughter; knowing death and the sound of guns by day and night, but resolved to live, not die!

The moving-picture theaters are crowded. Opening late in the afternoon and compelled to close at nine, they give only one or two showings a day. One evening an audience was following with great interest an American film. Suddenly an *obús* fell in the street outside. There was a tremendous detonation, but nobody moved from his seat. The film went on. Soon another fell, nearer and louder than before, shaking the whole building. The manager went out into the lobby and looked up and down the Gran Via. Overhead he heard the whine of shells. He went inside and mounted the stage to say that, in view of the shelling, he thought it best to stop the picture. Before he had got the words out of his mouth he was greeted with such a hissing and booing and stamping of feet and calls for the show to go on that he shrugged his shoulders in resignation and signaled the operator to continue. The house was darkened. The magic of Hollywood resumed its spell. While Franco's shells whistled dangerously over the theater, the film went its make-believe way to a thrilling denouement. The picture was called "Terror in Chicago."

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My Clash with LaGuardia

BY LANGDON POST

PUBLIC housing has become a reality. It has emerged from the realm of debate, oratory, surveys, and statistics. The federal government will now enter into annual subsidy agreements with local housing authorities and in three years will have lent 500 million dollars; this sum may even be increased by Congress before the three-year period expires. In other words, slum clearance and the building of low-rent housing accommodations are now on their way.

The baldness of this statement gives no measure of the importance or the implications of the change. Heretofore the crusaders, the so-called long-haired reformers, social workers, and idealists, have usurped the field of public housing. Now, we are told, we must turn it over to the practical men, for they are the men who built this great nation. This may be so, but I for one believe the dreamers did it—yes, even the star gazers. I do not wish to impugn the ability or the integrity of the practical man, but if he is the man who built our cities in the past, then I look with some trepidation on his entrance into the field of public housing, for any student of the growth of cities in this country will agree that it represents the ultimate in economic stupidity, social blindness, and human greed.

I wonder if this demand for the entrance of the practical man into the field is not possibly the beginning of the exploitation of the 500 million dollars waiting in Washington to be spent. Until the present there has been no money in public housing and little political preferment to be gained by espousing it. Now the picture is different, for a large housing program benefits not only the slum dwellers who are to be the tenants but all of business; and I will say for the average American business man, if he sometimes shows a lack of intelligence and foresight, his faculty for seizing an opportunity is developed to a high degree. And not only is money to be made in public housing today, but also great political advantage is to be gained, for it will be without question one of the greatest social movements of the next two generations.

This means that the degree of independence of the local housing authorities which are going to be responsible for spending this money—the United States government merely acts as banker—must be determined at once. The issue was raised recently in New York City in a controversy between Mayor LaGuardia and myself as chairman of the Housing Authority, and I wish to set forth as dispassionately as possible the two points of view out of which the controversy grew.

So-called "authorities" have been created by government in the past for the purpose of borrowing money and constructing and operating large public properties without pledging the public credit. Until now their use has been confined to very restricted activities—the building and operating of vehicular tunnels, bridges, sewers, drainage systems, and the like. With the creation of housing authorities, however, this new instrument of government enters upon activities which affect vitally the lives of many millions of persons. Housing is not just a matter for the engineer, the architect, and the accountant; it demands of those at its head the highest degree of political acumen and integrity. Housing is in politics.

I wish to give Mayor LaGuardia's point of view as fairly and as accurately as possible, as I have learned it from several talks with him on this most important matter. The Mayor fully realizes the implications and dangers inherent in an "authority" in this new field. He already has a number of local authorities to deal with—the Triborough Bridge, the Henry Hudson Bridge, the East River Tunnel, and the New York City Housing Authority. As mayor of the city he naturally feels that the responsibility for all governmental activities rests on his shoulders. He feels that if these various authorities, particularly the Housing Authority, have too great a degree of independence, he will be placed in the position of having a responsibility without the power to discharge it. There is, it must be admitted, some justification for this view.

However, let us look at the other side of the picture. So long as authorities were restricted to a very limited field the question of their independence did not arise. But when the problem of housing thousands of people is to be put in the hands of an authority, it becomes immediately apparent that the degree of its independence is of paramount importance and that any legislation creating such a body must contain more than merely machinery for borrowing money without pledging public credit.

I was among those who helped draft the New York State legislation creating housing authorities. During the two months we worked at it the most important subject of controversy was not the independence of the authorities, for that was never questioned, but the degree of independence. It must be remembered that we had been living for many years under the rule of Tammany Hall, and no one believed for a minute that the authority should be purely a city department subject to the termination of administrations and the will of the mayor. Some advocated giving as little control to the local government as possible—by allowing the mayor to appoint only part of the members, by requiring that appointment of all members should be subject to the approval of the State Housing Board, or by bringing all the activities

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of authorities under state jurisdiction. These more radical attempts to insure the independence of local authorities were defeated, but the bill as passed expressed the intent and spirit of those who sponsored it—namely, that the local housing authorities should have the greatest degree of independence consonant with the spirit of home rule and the need for municipal cooperation. The mayor was given the right to appoint all the members, but the terms of office were so staggered that, after the first appointments were made, the membership could never be completely changed in any one administration. It was only through an accident of circumstances—resignations and failure to fill vacancies—that Mayor LaGuardia found himself recently in a position to overturn the membership and thus change the policies of the New York City Housing Authority. The members were to serve without pay, and after the appointment of the first chairman by the mayor the authority was to elect its own chairman. These are sufficient examples of the intent and spirit of the law. The laws in other states were all drawn with the same purpose. In fact, in many states independence of the chief executive of the city is even more completely assured. In Pennsylvania and Ohio, for instance, the mayor is given the power of appointment of only some of the members of the authority; in Illinois the State Housing Board must approve the mayor's appointments.

It is clear then that the independence of local authorities was fundamental in the original conception. Sufficient justification for this view is to be found in the bitter experience of corrupt and devious municipal politics. I am sure that if Mayor LaGuardia thought the old Tammany methods of governing the city of New York were likely to return, he also would like to see an independent authority. But there are other reasons which have nothing to do with graft and corruption and which are equally important.

First, private capital must eventually be induced to consider public housing a field for investment. There is absolutely no reason why it should not and there is every reason why it should. Once the public-housing movement is established, and completed developments have been put in operation, I am convinced that it will open a field for investment that will equal if not surpass other investment fields of a public or semi-public character, such as railroads, public utilities, shipping, and the like. But will private capital invest in the bonds of local authorities which are subject to the domination of any particular local administration? Private capital demands first of all to be assured of the stability and continuity of the agency in which it is to invest. One of the reasons that private capital hesitates at this time is the fear that public housing will be subjected to all the uncertainties of politics. It must be remembered that the city's credit is not pledged as security for Housing Authority bonds.

Second, the independence of the authority is vital if the people living in the slums, from whom tenants will be selected, are to place confidence in it. The last four years have proved conclusively to me that the majority of people living in the slums still think it is necessary to have "political pull" in order to get into a development. For this reason many of them do not even take the trouble to apply. The New York City Housing Authority has made every effort to prove its impartiality in choosing tenants, but has not yet achieved its objective completely. Another problem is that of the relationship between tenant and management—in government housing a very delicate and highly explosive thing. There has not yet been sufficient public housing in this country to enable any definite conclusions to be drawn, but I am convinced from my experience in the New York Housing Authority that the success of tenant relationship depends almost entirely upon the degree of confidence which the tenants place in the authority. If the tenants once begin to think that decisions and policies of the authority can be changed or reversed by means of pressure brought to bear on outside officials, particularly the mayor, the authority will completely lose its grip and management will become impossible.

Third, in the selection of sites lie vast possibilities of graft and corruption. One only has to go through the files in the New York City Housing Authority to see the amount of influence that has been used by various persons, groups, and interests to have projects located in certain sections of the city. The local authority must have a program to which it strictly adheres if it is to attain its true objectives of large-scale slum clearance and low-rent housing. Pressure from whatever source must be resolutely resisted. If members are subject to immediate control and removal, this becomes almost impossible.

Other arguments exist for the independence of housing authorities, but these are basic and upon them rests the reason for the unanimity on this point of every housing law in the country. Mayor LaGuardia, in taking advantage of a series of circumstances which placed him in a position to overthrow the entire policy of the New York City Housing Authority and in publicly stating that if the members did not do as he told them he would get a new board, certainly violated the intent of the law. If he wishes to question the wisdom of this intent, that is his right as a human being; if he wishes to attempt to change it on the statute books, that is a right given him by the laws of a democratic country; but if he wishes to change it by indirection or nullify it by direct action, that is a right which should be denied him. This may well become an important issue in the future. It must be decided in the democratic manner.

In making my defense of the independence of housing authorities I do not wish to leave the impression that I believe they should sit on Olympian heights, protected and isolated from public opinion or political thought. That would be absurd, for without the cooperation, sympathy, and help of the local administration a housing authority would find it difficult, if not impossible, to carry on its work. These two agencies of government must feel mutual respect and share a determination to accomplish their common objectives.

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Issues and Men

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

AT THE risk of being charged with having sold out to the power companies, I wish to state my approval of Wendell Willkie's final stand in the conflict which has arisen between the government and the Commonwealth and Southern system, of which Mr. Willkie is the head. His offer to sell the corporation to the government at a just price to be fixed by a committee of three—one to be appointed by the President, one by the Supreme Court, and one by the company—seems to me eminently fair and wise. It certainly did not call for Mr. Lilienthal's response that the TVA would not pay for watered stock or "write-ups"; when Mr. Willkie offered to put the fate of the stockholders in the hands of a committee on which the government had two out of three representatives, he plainly showed his readiness to accept its decision as to what constitutes a fair valuation.

It also seems to me that Mr. Willkie's argument that his company could not go on if it were deprived of the large cities in which it operates by the creation of municipal plants is unanswerable. One of the highest officials in the Administration assured me a year ago that he considered the problem of how to deal justly with the power companies insoluble, for if the cities bought out the Commonwealth and Southern plants, the company could certainly not continue to operate its power lines or to light the small towns, villages, and farms which it often supplies with current at a loss or with little or no profit. This official saw no solution because he had not considered that the government might purchase the Commonwealth and Southern properties. Now the Administration must face the issue.

Personally I feel that the capital in the Commonwealth and Southern should not be ruthlessly destroyed; that the company should not be robbed of its city units and then have to junk the remainder of its properties; that there should be decent and just consideration of the 200,000 innocent investors whose money is in the enterprise. That does not mean that I wish the government to pay for watered stock and unfair write-ups. Of course not. It is quite probable that the stockholders will lose some of their investment if there is watered stock; they will have to pay then, as so many others have paid before them, for the misdeeds or the errors of judgment of the company managers to whom they intrusted their money. But it is surely vital that in dealing with the Commonwealth and Southern the government should set a standard of absolute probity and justice, whatever sins may be laid at Mr. Willkie's door, if only because this purchase of the Commonwealth and Southern system will be the forerunner of many similar acquisitions by the government.

Hard on top of Mr. Willkie's offer to sell out to the TVA comes the demand of the Governor of Pennsylvania that the federal government acquire the hard-coal industry in his state. This, too, is an event of extraordinary significance. Together, they prove the breakdown of the attempted regulation of the coal industry and of the electric utilities. All during my editorship of *The Nation,* from 1918 to 1934, I held that economic evolution and the impending collapse of the basic industries under private ownership and unlimited competition must inevitably result in government ownership. The situation of the coal industry of Pennsylvania is no different from that of West Virginia, Colorado, and other states. For years labor has been underpaid and penalized by long periods of no work, while at the same time investors have not been able to get a fair return on their investment. Conditions have been chaotic; even the attempted regulation under federal control offered little hope of improvement. So it has been absolutely certain that the day would come when all concerned would ask the government to take over.

Today the railroads are within sight of the same decision. They cannot go on as they have been going; they cannot continue to finance themselves; the evil results of Wall Street banker control and management are clear and undeniable. Senator Wheeler has been doing yeoman's work in bringing out the facts through the hearings of the Senate committee which has been investigating the railroad situation. The waste and extravagance, the huge profits made by bankers, especially in the reorganizations, and the absence of any attempt to reduce capital structures are all there. The railroads see only one way out—higher freight rates. But higher rates choke industry and are immediately another obstacle to the return of prosperity. Meanwhile the equipment is rapidly deteriorating and cannot be replaced. The answer is the purchase by the government of all the lines, with the resultant tremendous savings due to consolidations, joint terminals and purchases, the ending of needless competition. The government should not operate the roads directly through a Washington bureau; there should be a single operating company, as in the case of the government's Mississippi Barge Company, directed by a board comprising representatives of the government, the traveling public, the shippers, and the employees. Finally, I would point out that the oil industry is now so completely regulated by state and federal authorities that the next step there will be government ownership. It is badly needed to conserve this precious national resource, now somewhat controlled and regulated by the states and the federal government.

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BOOKS *and the* ARTS

THE PLEASURES OF LITERATURE

BY A BOOKLOVER

WITH how sure an expectation of solace, amid the turmoil and perplexities of our time, I turn, when the fires of evening are lit, to my silent companions of the library! Here the din of the city dies away; here the feverish antagonisms of men reveal themselves *sub specie aeternitatis*. Here may I be rapt as by a magic carpet to those miraculous isles of Greece—"lily on lily, that o'erlace the sea"—to journey with the returning Ulysses among the terrors, the perils, the enchantments of Homer's golden day; or I may bid imagination run riot with Shakespeare and his carnival fellows of the spacious days of great Elizabeth, assuming the motley of their bawdy humors, the purple of their splendid passions, the mourning of their fantastic revenges; or I may prowl with Dickens or Balzac among the mysteries of the dark modern cities or lurch with George Borrow along the hedgerows; or I may revel in the thousand and one tales, more enthralling than the "Arabian Nights," of Voragine's "Golden Legend," Vasari's "Lives of the Painters," or Havelock Ellis's "Psychology of Sex."

What a sovereign remedy is a book for the distempers both of the mind and of the body! How it protects us against sordidness and boredom! Shall I ever forget the exquisite delights of my first perusal of Congreve's plays, as I rode back and forth on the elevated, the subway, or the electric car, during my period of apprenticeship as a reporter on one of our great metropolitan dailies—an exercise which, I like to believe, had the effect of guaranteeing my style against the contagion of newspaper writing? Or the ecstasy of my discovery at college, and at almost the same moment, of Dante, the greatest poet, and Plato, the greatest proseman, of all time?—how, cycling alone in the Princeton lanes, leafy and fragrant with May, I would declaim the ringing tercets of the former!—how, to the flutter of the pages of the lexicon, the paragraphs of the "Phaedo" or the "Symposium" would commence to grow incandescent with a radiance which seemed steadily to glow more brightly, till the radiance of morning herself made luminous the Jersey murk!

With what relish—nay, what appetite of one famished!—I consumed the only book I read at Plattsburg, Anatole France's "Thaïs"—the enjoyment of which and of the bottles of cold milk we used to drink after our parching summer marches and of my conversations with Charles R. Walker, then at the peak of his early brilliance, is my only agreeable memory of an experience which convinced me definitely that, though I might perhaps do something with literature, I should never be a success as a soldier. How Michelet's "History of France" peopled the hills and the fields of Lorraine with the armies of Charles the Bold as I plodded among them in khaki—and made them seem so eroded and worn out, so tempered and yet so blighted, by that history of traditional quarrels which was still going on at the time and in which I found myself reluctantly involved that I felt powerfully the advantages of America, where we were not worried by history so much. And I carried the thick octavos of Renan all the way to German Trier after the Armistice, considerably encumbering my pack and seriously hampering my movements, but maintaining uninterrupted my access to an admirable spirit, international, critical, and humane, at a time when the qualities he represented were by no means in evidence either among his countrymen or in the nation which he more or less regarded as his intellectual fatherland.

And how much I enjoyed a few evenings ago reading "Le Neveu de Rameau" in bed, and how I expect to enjoy this evening reading the articles in the Encyclopaedia Britannica on Zionism, Hölderlin, and Peter the Great, which will enable me to fall asleep the wiser!

Indispensable books! Alternative worlds, where all discords are finally resolved, if not by philosophy, then by art—how should we live in this other world without you? Mary Colum is right when she says that one of the most terrible wounds which have been dealt the human spirit by dictatorship is its constriction of the dream life of humanity. For how can the edifices of statesmanship flourish where the constructions of art are forbidden?

At least that is the way I am getting to feel as I read the current discussions of literature in the more serious-minded reviews. They are driving me right back into the arms of Charles Lamb, John Addington Symonds, and Walter Pater: old duffers whom addiction to literature had rendered a little goofy but who did promote the appreciation of books.

In my youth we used to read James Huneker, who, chaotic and careless though he was, got you steamed up to read authors worth reading. Later on we read T. S. Eliot, who, though as sober as Huneker was boisterous, still stimulated the appetite for poetry and made the poets seem full of exciting surprises.

But Eliot's criticism was completely non-historical. He seemed to behold the literature of the ages abstracted from time and space and spread before him in one great exhibit, of which he conducted a comparative appraisal. This was of course an intellectual triumph, and his criticism had its enormous value; but it was a feat which

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could only be performed at the cost of detaching books from all the other affairs of human life; and the author of this complaint at that time used to urge the practitioners of literature to interest themselves in the development of society and in the larger events of the world—as most great literature, after all, had done. Even the non-moral and non-doctrinal Shakespeare, whose detachment seems so bafflingly consummate, presents issues—as Orson Welles's "Julius Caesar" has recently emphasized—of which, if you had read only Eliot on Shakespeare, you would have been given no intimation.

The depression did compel the writers to pay attention to the "social significance" of poems, novels, and plays; and in time this became an obsession. Today one is confronted by the spectacle of a philosophico-social criticism of a character purely analytical, which almost invariably comes to negative conclusions, and a politico-social criticism which, without making even the attempt of the other to ascertain the significance of the writer in the bigger historical frame, limits itself to giving him a high grade or a low grade corresponding to the degree of his readiness to subscribe to the slogans of some political faction.

The young, usually subject to exaggerated enthusiasms, are today not enthusiastic at all—not enthusiastic, that is, about books: they merely approve when the book suits their politics. But, seriously, I think it is a pity that they do not learn to read for pleasure. They may presently find that an acquaintance with the great works of art and thought is their only real insurance against the increasing barbarism of the time.

Back to the eager appetites of the Renaissance! Back to the "best that has been thought and felt in the world!" Back to John Keats first looking into Chapman's Homer! Back to Karl Marx reading Aeschylus through every year!

EDMUND WILSON
(*Not Christopher Morley*)

Fallow Land

BY EUNICE CLARK

Fallow land, how low the crows fly!

A lady of the house remembers amour;
The phlox survives, but hay runs thin where there
Birnam Wood crosses the pasture bars.

There shall be murder tonight in Pittsburgh!
But here are rainsore roofs, here tools unsoldered,
Vines over the windows, and bitterly
The rust assaulting and impertinent birds.

Choice fruit and eggs we used to send;
(the graveyard needs repair, the tombstones topple)
What are they eating now, the city people?
Kneel down, lady of the house, and pray.
Close over, forest. Fallow land, avenge
Her memories,
low-flying crows.

Revolution in Wonderland

THE WILD GOOSE CHASE. By Rex Warner. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.75.

POEMS. By Rex Warner. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.

THE writer who undertakes to express his ideas in the form of an allegory has chosen a difficult vehicle for them. The allegory is closely related to the parable, and the parable's purpose is to make a set of ideas more plain by exposing them through an unexpected set of images. Through this displacement reality must be rendered more, not less, clearly: it should not be distorted by the shift. Fantasy (the literary form) must be firmly based on the fact, and it must develop logically within itself. The joy given to the reader by "Gulliver" arises from things happening credibly in strange situations. "Yes, it would be like that!" is the response given, quite as much to the good sense and practical suggestions as to the imagination displayed by Swift.

It would be kind to call "The Wild Goose Chase" an extravaganza on revolutionary themes. Mr. Warner admires Kafka, and he has adapted a good deal of Kafkian detail and diffused Kafkian tone throughout his book. He also has read Swift. He fails where his masters succeed because, unlike them, he has no control over either his material or his emotions. He is not an artist gauging the first, or a mature human being with insight into the second. The two have collided on a level of his nature where extreme confusion holds, and the results are lamentable.

One element in Kafka's work which has not been thoroughly elucidated, and which bears on Mr. Warner's, is that in portions of Kafka's writing (notably in "The Trial") he deals with the material of his own obsessions. The atmosphere of "The Trial" is one which normal people come upon in bad dreams—which obsessed people project out upon reality. But Kafka, in "The Trial," deals with persecution delusion in so masterly a manner that he raises it into beauty and makes it a part of human experience. He attacks the problem with all the weapons of realistic approach. The horror and strangeness are thoroughly rendered, but the subconscious mechanisms are never allowed to throw up fantasy uncriticized. The development of the subconscious fantasy is continually being put through a checking process. Kafka is manipulating his nature and not being manipulated by it. Mr. Warner, on the other hand, with the best intentions in the world, gets nowhere because his subconscious nature, which he apparently knows nothing about, is manipulating him from the start.

Three brothers set out to find the wild goose ("freedom, naturalness"). One is ambitious. Another is an aesthete and a scholar. The third is "an ordinary young man." Their destination is an unknown country beyond a mysterious frontier. The peasants of this land are ground under by an insanely irresponsible and grotesquely heartless government whose seat is a fantastic modern city. The ambitious man and the scholar, both of whom are presented as perfect fools, accept the inhuman conditions put upon them by the government and are degraded by them. Not so the ordinary young man. He espouses the cause of the peasantry and enters the city determined to appeal to the king and change matters. No good comes of this plan. He then realizes that he cannot act alone, as a single adventurer. He returns to the countryside and works up a revolution which, although opposed by the police, spies, fiendish clergymen, and dreadful mechanical contraptions, finally, in a very bloody manner, succeeds. George—for that is the ordinary young man's name—then determines

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to create a new world according to the best Marxian formulas. The roof flies off the most horrid of the old institutions, and the wild geese are seen flying overhead.

The details thrown into this basic plan—and they are many—are so arbitrary, so futile, and so clumsy that they not only impede the story but often throw it violently off its track. If it suits the author's momentary convenience to erase someone from the plot or to change his or her nature overnight, the disappearance or the change is at once effected. Love affairs are dragged in by the heels, to point up George. Dreamlike events happen for reasons that remain obscure. Why Mr. Warner should have chosen, in the first place, to come out for revolutionary methods in terms of nightmare, it is difficult to discover. Through his poorly selected symbols the new world is made to seem as hideous as the old. All is translated into a phantasmagoria that the mind and emotions instinctively reject.

George, it may be mentioned in passing, at the beginning of the book shows resentment toward a male in authority by giving him a blow in the face. At the close of the book, having killed the king in a subterranean cave, beside an underground lake, George makes love to the king's mistress. Psychologists, who along with other scientists are deplored by Mr. Warner, could have a field day explaining George.

Mr. Warner's book of verse, "Poems," is better than his book of prose. Although rather smugly hortatory, and deriving from C. Day Lewis and Hopkins, it has moments of simplicity and beauty. It is curious that the author of "The Wild Goose Chase" should concern himself with poetry at all, since in his imaginary world poets are either idiots or frauds. But he has.

LOUISE BOGAN

The "Inside" of the China War

FIRST ACT IN CHINA. By James M. Bertram. The Viking Press. $3.

ALTHOUGH it deals with a restricted theme, the capture and release of Chiang Kai-shek in December, 1936, this book stands without peer as an introduction to the new China which is today bravely resisting the onslaught of Japanese arms. Most persons, even in China, either found the kidnapping of the Generalissimo inexplicable or falsely attributed it to the Chinese Communists. James Bertram, a young New Zealander fresh from Oxford, where he took top honors as a Rhodes Scholar, had the good fortune to be the only journalist to reach Sian immediately after Chiang's capture. Unlike most foreign journalists in China, he was not too proud to talk with all sorts of people, including Communists and *Tungpei* revolutionaries. As a result he has come forward with one of the great journalistic beats of recent times—a story of epoch-making importance which contradicts in many essentials the preconceptions of the whole newspaper-reading public.

For purposes of this review I shall skip the adventurous tale of the vicissitudes Bertram experienced in reaching Sian. It is sufficient to say that he went in with a man who turned out to be one of the leaders of the revolutionary faction responsible for the Generalissimo's detention. He found that the Communists, isolated some hundred miles west of Sian, were not even aware of the coup until some hours after it occurred. Nor does the kidnapping appear to have been premeditated. Chiang had gone to Sian for the purpose of persuading the Young Marshal and his followers to resume their campaign against the "Communist bandits." In so doing he had completely miscalculated the growth of anti-Japanese sentiment among the former Manchurian troops, for whom a continuation of civil strife was tantamount to treason. Having failed in persuasion, Chiang resorted to strong-arm tactics. Orders were given to transfer the Manchurian troops to the south, and to bring in troops loyal to Chiang's wishes.

Late on the evening of December 11 the Young Marshal called an emergency meeting at which it was decided to forestall this order dispersing the Manchurian troops by arresting Chiang Kai-shek. Despite some resistance by Chiang's bodyguard, the coup was carried out with unexpected ease. But Chiang himself escaped; and it was not until some hours later that he was found, barefooted and in his nightclothes, hiding in a cleft between a jutting shelf of rock and a mountain. Although there were groups within the Manchurian ranks that urged immediate execution of the commander-in-chief, the Young Marshal and the Communists, who were called in, insisted that he should be ultimately released as the one man who could lead China in a war against Japan. The pro-Japanese clique in Nanking, led by Ho Ying-chin, the War Minister, did all they could to prevent his release by threatening to bomb Sian and send an expeditionary force to crush the "rebellion."

Actually the release seems to have been arranged when it became evident that Chiang was deeply influenced by his talks with the rebel leaders, and that nothing further was to be gained by holding him. Both he and Madame Chiang agreed to give favorable consideration to the Young Marshal's eight-point program for the establishment of a common front against Japan. From a purely practical point of view Chiang may have decided that it would be less trouble to come to an agreement with the Communists than to continue expensive and unpopular campaigns against them.

The book contains far more than a sketch of the Sian incident. In relating the story of his own adventures, his contacts with the *Tungpei* revolutionaries, with Agnes Smedley, and a few liberal missionaries, Mr. Bertram manages to give a vivid picture of the essential developments in Chinese history during the last fifteen years. He tells of the brave days of 1927 when the workers seized Shanghai from the reactionary war lords, only to be slaughtered by Chiang Kai-shek; of the killing of Chang Tso-lin by the Japanese in 1928; of the founding and growth of the Chinese Soviets, culminating the famous "long march" from Kiangsi to Shensi and Kansu; and of the student uprisings in the fall of 1935. He understands both the revolutionary zeal of the youth of China and the utter lack of principle of the older magistrates and war lords, and he has succeeded as have few writers before him in making the history of this far-distant land come alive. No one who is even casually interested in developments in the Far East will want to miss this book; and anyone,regardless of his interests, will find it fascinating reading.

MAXWELL S. STEWART

Epic of the Pocket-Book

FOREVER ULYSSES. By C. P. Rodocanachi. Translated by Patrick Leigh-Fermor. The Viking Press. $2.50.

AFTER all these contemporary adventure sagas in which our virile journalists, doctors, and playwrights cover such unusual quantities of geography, it would be nice perhaps to open a novel about one man sitting in one room, meeting nobody important, going no place unusual and, having nothing to do, doing nothing. Yet belonging as it does in

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the ranks of these extraordinary odysseys of a sedentary age, "Forever Ulysses" is a distinctive and, I think, valuable chronicle.

Our modern Ulysses starts as a Cephalonian bootblack, learns his lessons in an Egyptian bordello, is captured by the savage African dervishes and held, for his financial genius, as the royal prisoner of their Mahdi. Escaping at last with the aid of Kitchener, Ulysses skips to Venezuela. In a really brilliant display of higher finance he assists Castro to repay his American debt with great gain to everybody but the Americans, and ends his days as the mysterious, omnipotent, and sanctified director of an international munitions combine. " 'Of many men he knew the towns and read the minds'—and profited by them all."

The question is, however, did he? The ten terrible years that Ulysses spends under the whip of the African Mahdi, his life a "dream of riches and a nightmare of heads severed from their trunks"—are these not symbolic of the entire span of his life? In the perpetual throes of this dream and this nightmare Ulysses has no need for friends, family, or feelings. Even sex is less important to the modern hero than his 6 per cent. And is there much difference, after all, between the brutal Mahdi, this "fundamentally evil, fanatical, double-dealing, and ruthless barbarian," and the Ulysses who becomes the debonair financier of international arms? The Mahdi serves up his victims' heads for dinner while Ulysses allows them to remain on the battlefields and in the streets of bombed towns.

The distinction is merely one of proximity, and Mr. Rodocanachi is too subtle a commentator not to know it. For there are fine analyses in his book of the ethics of the oppressed, the Greek spirit, the sponge-divers of Hydra, imperialism, politics, the noble savage, and of such smaller things as reading the morning newspaper. Mr. Rodocanachi is skeptical, witty, sometimes a little glib or heavily ironic, but usually quite discerning. And while he is ostensibly defending in "Forever Ulysses" the extreme modern form of what Lytton Strachey called "the energy of self-assertiveness," he has managed to present a diverting and effective case against it.

MAXWELL GEISMAR

At Versailles

AT THE PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE. By James T. Shotwell. The Macmillan Company. $4.

PROFESSOR SHOTWELL played an important role among the advisers of the American delegation at the Paris Peace Conference, notably in the drafting of the labor clauses of the now wrecked treaty, for his share in which laboring men the world over owe him a lasting debt of gratitude. His diary of his activities at the conference, filled out by notes made at the time and by comments written eighteen years later, is therefore a valuable contribution to the history of what took place in Paris in the name of peace. It is all the more so because Professor Shotwell stands up in considerable degree for the peacemakers and feels that a "myth" has been created in which the Peace Conference figures "as a sinister thing, sowing dragons' teeth, vindictively, subtly, while high-minded idealists looked on confused and frustrated." He thinks that the time is now approaching when this myth can be examined "with something more nearly approaching fair-mindedness." Hence he makes his contribution. His day-by-day report of happenings at Paris as he observed them aids his case by making clear how extraordinarily

"The first really good biography of China's Chiang."—Time Magazine

Strong Man of China

THE STORY OF CHIANG KAI-SHEK

By ROBERT H. BERKOV

THIS, the first complete and impartial biography of China's mysterious Strong-Man, marshalls facts which few, even in China, know, and explains the paradoxes in Chinese politics, personalities, and policies, and tells the romantic story of Chiang Kai-shek's rise from poverty to dictatorship. Robert Berkov is Manager of the Shanghai Bureau of the United Press. Illustrated $3.00

Mr. Witt among the Rebels

By RAMON J. SENDER

RAMON SENDER, one of Spain's greatest writers, presents the problem of the reluctant revolutionist, against the background of the Spanish rebellion of 1873. The staid and fussy Mr. Witt, living snugly in a pure Victorian atmosphere, worrying over the obstinacy of Spanish bookbinders, is suddenly catapulted into the revolt. His beautiful and impulsive wife further complicates matters by supporting the rebels. This is a wittily ironic picture of a 'do-nothing' liberal, and the inevitable consequences of his policy. $2.50

By the author of "Counter-Attack in Spain"

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involved and difficult the peacemaking was for the best-intentioned treaty-makers.

His thesis is that the peace treaties have been charged "with much for which they were not to blame." The war itself was "responsible for much that was attributed to the treaties, and pre-war Europe was responsible for the issues of the war." That may be true, but it certainly does not relieve the chief actors in the struggle of their responsibility for the outcome—unless we are to regard them as merely creatures of fate swept along irresistibly by the currents created by the war. This we cannot concede, however, because we know that Mr. Wilson himself, for example, molded two of the worst features of the Versailles treaty against the protests of Lloyd George. Professor Shotwell admits that Lincoln would have done otherwise in Paris than Woodrow Wilson did, and that "the supreme attribute of statesmanship, magnanimity, was lacking in Paris." He even criticizes Mr. Wilson to the extent of pointing out how strange it was that he "should have been so rigid in his ethical outlook as to fail to see how far some of the items in the treaties were from any generous or even fair construction of the Fourteen Points." He thinks that Mr. Wilson always fell back upon a belief that the new order would rectify the wrongs of the old—and, doubtless, of the treaty; but that he failed to see that rectification could not be postponed "without weakening and ultimately endangering the very existence of the League."

On the other hand, he declares that to place the whole responsibility upon Wilson is to ignore the fact that Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and many others were joint authors of the treaty, and that some of the gravest mistakes "were committed by others in succeeding years." He also flies to the defense of the President by denouncing Maynard Keynes's characterization of him as "a brilliantly written but utterly irresponsible diatribe against President Wilson." This is the more remarkable because Professor Shotwell nowhere refers to Harold Nicholson's even more devastating picture of Wilson in his "Peacemaking, 1919" save to apologize for his volume's resemblance to that book. But solid and valuable as Professor Shotwell's contribution to history is, it cannot be compared with the brilliance and independence of Mr. Nicholson's writing. That is in part because a printed diary can never have the life and movement of a fresh narrative, in part because this author has a heavier style, perhaps a certain sense of responsibility to defend wherever it is possible.

Finally, Professor Shotwell concedes that "the Peace Conference failed to meet the expectation of the liberal and progressive thinkers in almost every country," which is certainly as mild and polite and gentlemanly a characterization of the shameful betrayal of the aspirations of the embattled peoples of the world as one could ask, but hardly phrases the facts. Professor Shotwell thinks that the challenge of today is to "repair the bulwarks of peace" and "strengthen or, if need be, rebuild the League of Nations" so "that somewhere in the world the forces of peace may be mobilized against the oldest instrument of politics—war." All of which is sound enough. But Professor Shotwell fails to see that it is necessary to do more than revitalize the corpse of the League; it is now a question whether headway can be made against war until capitalism as we know it is reformed or abolished. Those who, like Professor Shotwell, really believed in 1917 that war could be ended by war and a new society of nations built on the bodies of ten million dead, and have not yet wholly seen the light, have many more disillusionments before them.

OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

Poet in Caucasia

PROMETHEUS AND THE BOLSHEVIKS. By John Lehmann. Alfred A. Knopf. $3.75.

THE flood of books about Russia, representing every shade and tint of opinion, continues to pour out, though other parts of the world—Abyssinia, Spain, China—compete with it in the news. The flood will continue, no doubt, and even increase in volume, as long as Russia remains soviet and the rest of the world something else. This example by John Lehmann, mainly a travel book about the Caucasus, is somewhat on the "delightful, dear Bolshevik" side. Most of us like garden paths but don't care to have them sprayed with the milk chocolate of Beverley Nichols; and many of us like our Soviet Union neater, with perhaps some of its acid, its occasional cruelty, but with all its full-bloodedness, its energy, vitality, and youth. This way, to my mind, it even makes better propaganda since it creates no false ideas that foreshadow disillusionment.

John Lehmann is one of the Eton-bred school of Communists. He is not as bad as one I once met who exclaimed that he thought Russia "splendid, because it was all like a great public school." But he is a bit inclined to dilate lovingly on the fascinating faces of youngsters, and he is at his worst when he is being sentimental about Stalin's childhood, which, to his imagination, seems to have been enchanting and cute. His book is a travel book, and like all travel books written by travelers, rather than for travelers by people who know the country better, it is superficial. Of Hevsuria, the only part of the Caucasus besides Tiflis where I have lived, he writes a good deal that is foolish—though he admits that he hasn't been there and is taking the opinions of people who haven't been there either.

But John Lehmann is also a poet and a good poet at that, and it is for this reason that his book has value. Although his chapters on the Georgian theater and art are interesting, it is poetry, and the life and opportunities of the writer, that really excites him. And because he knows what he is talking about, he provides a good and stimulating introduction to Georgian poetry, both its classics, from Rustavelli down, and its modern poetry, which under the Soviet regime is having a renascence. He himself has put into verse translations of some of the new poems; and whether it is John Lehmann or the modern Georgian poets or both, they are excellent, full of vigor and a beautiful, warm lyricism. One could almost wish that he had devoted the whole book to the subject of poetry.

And because he is a good poet, there are certain passages, the description of a station platform in Moscow before the train pulls out, of a part of the Abhazian coast, of an afternoon on the beach at Yalta, that are vivid, colorful, and rich. They are the personal impressions of a poet, and perhaps the book would be better had he remained personal and not tried to be objective. His humor is too dainty and his propaganda puny. Of this last there is good solid substance, but it comes from the mouths of two Georgians, a writer and a producer, men who knew where they sat and were well grounded in what was going on around them, which, seemingly, John Lehmann isn't. There is one chapter of good travel writing, about a German village in the Caucasus, and two chapters of fairly well-collated background. Otherwise his are the notes of any Intourist tourist.

R. M. MACGREGOR

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"The Crabbed Line"

SELECTED POEMS. By Allen Tate. Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.

IN HIS brief preface Allen Tate, who has been "frequently asked how I can violate the original experience which must have informed some poem, by revising it later at a time when my experience must be different," has the demure rejoinder that "as a poet, I have never had any experience." Such a judgment is less than disconcerting, and might be amended with the further explanation that his place as an artist is, by this right, with his old Confederate who announces that "it is a privilege to be dead." Mr. Tate, however, prefers to explain that "as a poet my concern is the experience that I hope the reader will have in reading the poem." He does not go on to reveal precisely how the feat is to be accomplished, for "the experience," which has never existed, would in some way have to be apprehended and relished by an imagined reader. One surmises, therefore, that these poems issue immaculately from nothing more than the will to create, and that they operate imaginatively in whatever vacuum remains after the element of individual experience has been divorced from the creative process.

A rereading of these poems amply confirms this impression. Even Mr. Tate would agree that where experiential factors are absent, and will and imagination furnish the keystones to the poetic edifice, the materials which fall to hand are the materials of rhetoric. Readers of his "Reactionary Essays" will recall, in this connection, the epigram of Yeats which is there made so much of, denoting rhetoric as "will trying to do the work of imagination." The words to be considered in Mr. Tate's case are "rhetoric," "will," and "work." They are important words, whether one will or no, not because they happen to be the stock in trade of a confirmed rhetorician, but because they have furnished him with a few admirable poems like Mr. Pope, Pastoral, and Causerie.

Among the vices which cannot be charged to this poet, certainly, are indolence and want of conscience. Many of the poems here reprinted, like the Ode to the Confederate Dead —upon which the odor of embalming fluids is still heavy— have been tirelessly revised over a period of six and ten years; others have been "completely renovated." It is nevertheless a fact that Mr. Tate has "worked" with rhetoric and will only, and has evolved not an "experience" but a façade. In the quest for emotional experiences (for his reader, let it be noted) it has been his practice to contrive a *furor poeticus* out of rhetoric and cold sweat, out of favorite *words* like "rage," "barbarous," and "furious with blood," or, as in one egregious instance, by loading six lines with an arpeggio of invective like "bastard" into "bawd" into "strumpet" into "plain bitch." Even his large effects of astringency and intellectuality are as often as not the result of synthetic associations ("blind, important cab," "the important picnic of a fool," "expensive hill," "touseled eyes," "foreign hair," and the like), where the "strange" word arrests not by its plangency but by its opacity.

It is possible that excellent poetry of a sort may be compounded of will and rhetoric alone, especially when, as with Tate, an intellect of distinction supplies the mortar. "Intellect is a mansion," but Mr. Tate's deficiencies are touched by the intellect only at a point, just as they are touched by his lack of humor at a point. His fondness for the poetic furniture of Eliot—his eagles, trapped old men, broken houses, scuttling crabs—has often been pointed out, and for all his painstaking revision it persists to the present volume. What has been less carefully noted is the astonishing poverty of

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his images, the spuriousness of his language, in which words are mere counters in a tableau, the absence of sparkle and excitement in the processes of his intellection. It is hardly enough to maintain with Mr. Tate that "we speak the crabbed line," unless by crabbedness one understands a "knotty" thinking which is whorled about the juice and fiber of an idea. There are valid grounds for questioning, moreover, whether even so haunting a metaphor as that propounded in the last verse and a half of The Subway is worth the commonplace twelve and a half which precede it. For every striking line in these poems there are too many perfunctory recitatives like "Time begins to elucidate her bones," too many metaphors like that which describes words as "clear like a young harlot's false, pellucid pap," too many sterile periphrases like "breath, expunger of the mortal streak of nature" and "stone—peaked margin of antiquity's delay." The "work" of the imagination entails, certainly, the triumph of the creative will over this sort of cold mutton, but there are further benefits, equally as needful, which come as gifts from the motions of the imagination at "play." These, however, are possible only to the "poet as seer who experiences life in behalf of the population," or fancies he does so. And this is a picture with which Mr. Tate, who must make a virtue of necessity, unfortunately has "no sympathy at all."

BEN BELITT

Militarism and Society

THE HISTORY OF MILITARISM. ROMANCE AND REALITY OF A PROFESSION. By Alfred Vagts. W. W. Norton and Company. $4.75.

DR. VAGTS is well known to historians for his voluminous treatise on the diplomatic relations between Germany and the United States from 1890 to 1906, a remarkable book which impressed the reader not only by a stupendous mastery of the material but also by an unusually deep penetration into the interdependence of diplomacy and economic and intellectual currents. His new book has similar qualities. Although it lacks to a certain extent clarity of arrangement and is overburdened with a richness of material, always interesting, mostly pertinent, but rendering less clear the general outline of thought, the book should be highly recommended to the general reader, not only on account of its intrinsic value, but because it is the first history of militarism in its social and political setting. There would be no one better equipped than Dr. Vagts to write such a history. To him military history seems as familiar as economic and political history. Although a German, he has as intimate a knowledge of American as of German history, and he is entirely free of any pro-German bias. As far as there is any bias in the book, it is a slight anti-French bias which the author has in common with many modern American historians and political writers.

Dr. Vagts in the beginning of his book rightly points out that militarism is not identical with military efficiency. It connotes "a domination of the military man over the civilian, an emphasis on military considerations, spirit, ideals, and scales of value, in the life of states." This militarism, which ranks military institutions and ways above the ways of civilian life, has existed most clearly in Prussia and in Japan, in countries where the middle classes have not risen to power as they have in the United States, in France, or in Great Britain. The danger of militarism exists everywhere, and each country has its military men to whom war, as to Hindenburg, is as "refreshing as a mineral-water bath." But in other countries where the successful social revolution of the middle classes had established democracy firmly, civilian authority maintained, although sometimes only after bitter struggle, its control over the military men and the military mind even in war time; in Germany and in Japan, where the feudal mind has remained victorious up to now, the military took precedence over the civilian in spite of occasional liberal remonstrance even in peace time. How Germany came to represent militarism as she did is told by Dr. Vagts in three excellent chapters which are among the best of his book and may claim classic rank on account of their brilliant and cogent penetration of the social and political factors involved.

In the first of the three chapters he shows that the famous Prussian reformers after 1806 were anything but protagonists of the rising classes. The nationalism of the Prussians was not an autonomous, spontaneous popular growth from below as in France during the French Revolution; it was induced by artificial pressure from without and from above. "What the advice of these reformers involved was not a revolution, but a counter-revolution by reform." The reforms helped to maintain the power of the nobility and of the bureaucracy in Prussia, "whose egotism has rarely been surpassed outside Prussia." The second chapter deals with the dramatic story of the fight between militarism and liberalism in Prussia from 1850 to 1866 (pp. 198-221), which finally resulted in a situation of which the author says: "Nowhere in Western Europe was the army so completely isolated from political interference, while guaranteeing the political power of the class from which the dominating officer type sprang. Nowhere was the army more solidly organized and the public mind more effectively militarized." The third chapter deals with the World War and with one of the most illuminating moments, the shifting of responsibility for the war and its defeat.

The German ruling class had proved a failure in the World War, but the German army under the leadership of Hindenburg was greeted at the return from the lost war as "heroes unbeaten in the field." Here is the origin of the stab-in-the-back legend, of the new lease of life granted to the Prussian officers and their class, of the accession to power of Hindenburg, whom Dr. Vagts calls "the high priest of Prussia's army Moloch." The German generals "in their common flight from responsibility, which they had proudly claimed as long as victory seemed to smile upon them, were powerfully assisted by the behavior of the Allies. The latter not only desisted from carrying the war into the Reich, thus demonstrating to the German people that they were the victors; they also refrained from demanding that the German army through its leaders sue for the armistice, and take the blame as other capitulating generals had been forced in other wars. Never did beaten generals escape with so much honor as in post-war Germany." Erzberger and the German Republic had to sue for peace and to bear the brunt of a lost war which was not of their making and which they did not lose.

Militarism and the military mind are everywhere an ever-pressing danger to civilian government, as not a few British and French generals, the Dreyfus affair, and the Ulster revolt prove. But in France the President of the Chamber replied to a rightist deputy who claimed the supremacy of the army: "Nothing is above the laws of the country, and nothing is more factious than putting the military force above the laws." After France's defeat and civil war in 1871, as in Germany after 1918, a marshal of the old imperial army became Presi-

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dent of the republic. Both tried to protect and shield reactionary generals. But Marshal MacMahon was forced to resign by Parliament, and what followed was the victory of liberal intellectuals in the Dreyfus affair. Marshal Hindenburg was not ousted by the German Parliament but praised and glorified, and what followed was the defeat of liberal intellectuals by Hitler.

The reading of Dr. Vagts's excellent book will help us to understand better the military mind and the dangers of militarism. In a democracy military matters should not be left to "experts" alone, democracy has to be educated to study and to understand them as an important preparation for the maintenance of civilian power in government, even in war time. Fascist countries preach an uncritical worship of discipline, leadership, and heroism. Democracies should train to an informed and intelligent discussion of military aims and efficiency. Past experiences, of which Dr. Vagts quotes many examples, show that the military mind is not always the most efficient mind, that blind discipline is in no way better than individual initiative, and that "there is every reason to suppose, as the French Front Populaire insists, that democracy is preferable from the sheer technical point of view."

HANS KOHN

Shorter Notices

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE: THE MAN IN HIS TIME. By John Bakeless. William Morrow and Company. $3.75.

Mr. Bakeless's learned yet lively volume might well be taken as a model by specialists who wish to write for the general public. Enormous labor has obviously gone into its making, for the author has thoroughly mastered all the known documents and added some interesting if minor discoveries of his own. Yet thanks to a lively style and to great skill in the selection of illustrative material, his book can hardly fail to interest even those who start with a complete ignorance of the subject. The method is, to be sure, one which requires a more thorough familiarity with a historical and literary background than most biographers have, but it proves that vividness and narrative interest can be achieved without recourse to "novelization" or any other vulgar journalistic device. Marlowe has always been the most interesting of Shakespeare's contemporaries, and recent scholarship has succeeded in uncovering documents which not only illuminate his career but make it possible to know his character and personality rather better than we know the character and personality of Shakespeare himself. To Mr. Bakeless's book the specialist will hardly be able to raise any objection more serious than that it reminds him of some things with which he is already familiar. The general reader will find it not only the best account of Marlowe's life and work but also a more enlightening introduction to the Elizabethan literary background than any other recent book.

THE SAILOR'S HOLIDAY. By Eric Linklater. Farrar and Rinehart. $2.

"The Sailor's Holiday" is a gently delirious bit of fooling calculated for connoisseurs in the fine art of literary bubble-blowing. Its hero is Henry Tippus, a simple sailor gifted or cursed with an unquenchable tendency to invent the most elaborately credible tales concerning his imagined experiences on land and sea. He begins them spontaneously, with the most naive and happy motives, only to be utterly intoxicated by the plausibility of his own inventions. His innocent

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genius simply catapults him from one escapade into another. All things start normally for Henry, but once he begins to talk, so rich is his fancy and so glib his tongue that only the most insane consequences can ensue. The merest of them involves his imprisonment for the sake of a dachshund, the most momentous his engineering of the elopement of the injured Isobel, bed and all, by block and tackle, through her boudoir window, and the most touching his never-to-be-consummated love for the adipose daughter of an elusive hermit. Mr. Linklater writes with perfectly incongruous elegance and a complete mastery of the twin arts of aimlessness and irrelevance. The result is a series of amusing, blithely irrational episodes which meet prosaic reality head-on with a barrage of custard pies.

I WAS A SHARE-CROPPER. By Harry Harrison Kroll. The Bobbs-Merrill Company. $2.75.

With the awakening of the American people to the seriousness of the share-cropper's plight, more books on this subject are to be expected. Mr. Kroll, who lifted himself out of the life of his people by his own bootstraps, looks back with wistful sympathy at those who could not escape with him. There is a rugged gentleness about the writing which somehow seems characteristic of cotton folk. In spite of his own success, Mr. Kroll has the fatalism that accepts poverty as one of the inevitable facts of life. In a sense it is unfortunate that the author ceased to be a share-cropper long before the outbreak of the revolt in King Cotton's realm which has given books like his a ready audience. Having found his personal solution in the success he has achieved, he does not bother with the economics of the world he has left behind. When he returns for a brief visit to his mother's cabin to give her two hundred dollars, he can only think hopelessly of his sister's share-cropper husband: "If luck went against him, he and Birdy would be dependent in their old age after a lifetime of sweat and poverty. He was a share-cropper." Despite the tenderness with which this autobiography is written, it has for its theme that ugly thought—"The poor you have always with you."

FILMS

What Pictures Mean

THE current "March of Time" gives itself over entirely to one subject: "Inside Nazi Germany, 1938." The film is advertised by its makers as uncensored, so that anybody who goes to see it—and it is said that twenty-five million will see it—may expect to look upon the land of the swastika with camera eyes, noting as much as there is time for while the lens sweeps candidly among sixty-two million people. Such an expectation is of course naive. The cameras of the "March of Time" have not roved at random; there has been careful and subtle selection; and the impression left by the film will probably be definite. But what will the impression be?

It is strange that such a question should arise. Pictures ought to mean just what they say, and since they speak an unambiguous language it should be easy to know what they say. And I must confess that until I was walking out from a preview of these pictures I considered their statement to

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be as plain as a sausage. To me they had announced simply and clearly that nothing could be more dreadful than the thing that had happened to the German people. Not that I had seen a "suffering" people. Far from it. For all the world as if the film had been censored after all, or as if Goebbels himself had directed it, the spectacle was of a healthy and willing people pitching into a series of national enterprises—athletic, industrial, conservationist, military. They did not act as if they knew what had happened to them: as if they knew that they had lost their liberty. Or if they did know it they seemed on the whole to be content. The young men, stripped to the waist, who were doing compulsory labor in a national drive against soil erosion looked as good-natured and as well-fed as any similar number of CCC boys; the housewife who saluted and said "Heil Hitler" as she handed to a Nazi in uniform the money she had saved from yesterday's one-course meal did not appear haunted by the ritual; and the worker with his evening paper wore no lines of worry on his face because the government had denied him the right to strike and had decided just what his paper should tell him about it. That was the dreadful thing, I thought: worse even than the evidences of a great war machine and the photographs of Nazis parading with banners here at home. For there are other war machines, and the American Nazis were obviously silly; they would never be taken seriously. What might be taken seriously—and the conversation I overheard as I walked out put this in my head for the first time—was the appearance almost everywhere of efficiency and well-being. "Many Americans will wonder," said a famous man within my hearing, "why those means couldn't be employed over here—of course to a different end. But the means would be dangerous, and I am afraid they will be thought attractive enough to try."

Such Americans, it must be said, either will have failed to hear the commentator who accompanies the film with an unremitting verbal attack upon Nazism or will have dismissed his irony as irrelevant. But it may well be that the pictures will speak louder than the words to many ears, and that the irony will be missed. What then will the pictures mean? Or the whole of the performance, pictures versus words? It is strangely difficult to say. I can hope that everyone will feel as I felt. But I must admit that documents are double-edged, and that pictures can mean as many things as there are thoughts to make them mean.

MARK VAN DOREN

DRAMA

The "Living Newspaper"

"ONE THIRD OF A NATION" (Adelphi Theater) is the latest edition of the Federal Theater's "Living Newspaper." It deals in vivid, informing fashion with the problem of slum housing in New York City, and it is certainly one of the best of the series. To open and close the performance there is a brief scene of a fire in a three-story tenement which is a real triumph of imaginative realism and would probably cause a furor if it had been created by Reinhardt. But the major part of the evening is devoted to frank journalism of a new, ingenious, and extremely effective kind.

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Many of the devices used have been made more or less familiar by various *avant-garde* experiments; there are, for example, the off-stage voice, the interpolated moving-picture film, the "plant" in the audience, and the tendency to move on different levels of abstraction in dramatizing the various scenes. But for a reason which I shall presently come to, none of them seems to me to have ever justified itself so completely as it has in the "Living Newspaper." Each of them serves here a genuine purpose, and that fact removes from all the curse of preciosity.

"One Third of a Nation" is frankly journalism and not Art. The distinction is not made invidiously, and neither is it based upon anything esoteric or academic. It implies merely something which is perfectly obvious—namely, that the purpose of the performance is to convey certain bits of specific, documented information and to enforce certain simple definite convictions; that it is, in a word, not a piece of fiction but a "feature article," whose primary concern is the effective presentation of fact. To say that is of course to say that the substance of the piece should be reviewed by an economist rather than by a dramatic critic, who as a layman can say no more than that the exposition carries intellectual conviction. But it does leave the critic the right to deal with the method of presentation, and it tempts me to say roundly that what we have here is the most successful effort to use the stage for the purpose of propaganda that I have seen in some fifteen years devoted in part to pretty consistent grumbling against sometimes infantile and sometimes all too precious attempts to use for simply didactic ends an art form which was evolved for other purposes.

"One Third of a Nation" is as good as it is partly because Arthur Arent, the author, Philip Barber, the producer, and the others concerned in the production are obviously men of talent. But perhaps even more credit belongs to whoever it was who realized that the proper way to go about doing what they wanted to do was to do just that without trying to do anything else. Indeed, unless one has seen first a play like, let us say, John Howard Lawson's "Marching Song," it is impossible to realize just how much is accomplished by the simple expedient of presenting information and a few concrete illustrations of what that information means instead of trying to slip the information and the argument with which one is really concerned between the lines of a conventional play in which one is not interested at all. It has long been my conviction that to talk of "fictionalizing" biography, or history, or economics, or politics is to talk nonsense. Nothing can be "fictionalized," because a subject is either fiction to begin with or it never will be. But that does not mean that biography and politics and all the rest are not interesting in themselves or that they cannot be presented vividly through exposition which includes concrete illustrations. The "Living Newspaper" does just that. It is interesting in itself, and it may teach others to present effectively what they have to say. Personally I am hardly less pleased to realize that it may also help prevent a good many bad plays from being written.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

ORSON WELLES, whose productions of "Julius Caesar" and "Shoemaker's Holiday" are the sensation of the season, will write of his approach to the theater in an early issue of THE NATION.

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Letters to the Editors

The Old Red Menace

Dear Sirs: In his illuminating article, Los Angeles Grows Up, in your issue of January 8, Oliver Carlson puts the cart before the horse in one case. He gives the impression that because Communists are in C. I. O. unions, the red scare is being whipped up. But the red scare is the time-honored—and now pretty much time-bedraggled—weapon of the open-shoppers. In the accounts of the dynamiting of the Los Angeles *Times* back in 1910—when no American Communist Party had been thought of—astonishingly similar red-scare language was used, and one commentator, C. K. McClatchey of the Sacramento *Bee,* wrote of Lincoln Steffens, who was trying to help settle the case out of court, "He goes to the bat for every dripping murderer."

The abuse of Edward Vandeleur and other Old Guard officials, as well as of the Merchants' and Manufacturers' Industrial Association, is heaped on any labor leader who does not "sell out," who won't "make deals" behind closed doors. It is well known on the West Coast that Harry Bridges refused a huge bribe during the longshoremen's strike. This abuse and the epithet "red" are the rewards of any labor leader today who continues, even through success, to lead labor. They are becoming the trademarks of incorruptibility. The experience of West Coast labor struggles has made that clear to countless rank-and-file trade unionists. Membership in the Communist Party is not the reason labor leaders are hated. In California democracy itself is a "red menace."

ELLA WINTER

Carmel, Cal., January 17

Nebraska's Unicameral

Dear Sirs: Oswald Garrison Villard, in your issue of December 4, finds it "extremely gratifying" that a proposal for a one-chamber state legislature is to be brought before the New York State constitutional convention which meets this year. I believe that it behooves other states to await the outcome of Nebraska's experiment before copying it. I voted for the Unicameral and was enthusiastic in support of it, but I cannot say that it is much of an improvement. We have only 43 members. I have always believed that our Unicameral should have 100 members to provide the electorate with proper representation. Moreover, 43 members is such a small number that it is easy for lobbyists to cultivate an intimate acquaintance with each of them.

It is a matter of record that our Unicameral passed more laws—many of them objectionable—than any previous legislature, and that it made the biggest appropriations ever made. The appropriations are defended as having been necessary, which I regard as only partly true, as many fat jobs were created. According to the Omaha *World-Herald* of October 3 last, which is friendly to Governor Cochran, 370 new jobs were created at an expense of about $35,000 a month to the taxpayers. Many of those jobs were on the state highway patrol, which was established by the Unicameral after it had been voted down in a statewide referendum four years ago. The optometrists also got in their work on the Unicameral, and in order to obtain a driver's license you must pass an eyesight test.

Bear in mind that our state has about one-tenth the population of New York, and adding $35,000 a month to our tax roll is equivalent to adding $350,000 a month to yours. Can you afford it? My advice to Samuel Seabury and all of the rest of you is to wait and see how our experiment turns out.

CLARENCE RECKMEYER

Fremont, Nebraska, January 20

They Signed with Reservations

Dear Sirs: In the company of others we signed the letter protesting against *The Nation's* present policy on the war issue which you printed in your last number. We agreed with the fundamental purpose of that letter, but we had no hand in the drafting of it, and we disagreed with it in certain matters of secondary detail. The chief of our disagreements is with the sentence which reads: "The Neutrality Act is a piece of democratic legislation expressing the will of the American people to keep out of war."

We consider the Neutrality Act a piece of deceptive and tricky legislation which, at the same time that it gives expression to the will of the American people to keep out of war, distorts and perverts that will. Under it the Spanish government has been denied the right to purchase materials of war in the United States, while Italy, also party to the Spanish war, has not been so denied. The Ethiopian case was similar. The so-called Neutrality Act, in our judgment, has been so drawn and so applied that it has served, is serving, and may in the future serve to defeat the ends which are implied in its title.

CHARLES S. ZIMMERMAN
BERTRAM D. WOLFE

Brooklyn, January 20

Conclusive Figures

Dear Sirs: Those who argue that to invoke the Neutrality Act would neither hurt China nor help Japan ignore the reports of the National Munitions Control Board. And yet the figures are conclusive. Since the start of the Far Eastern war China has purchased from the United States more than five times the amount of munitions that Japan has purchased, or $6,718,933 worth as compared to $1,552,583. During November China bought $1,702,370 worth of munitions, which is more than Japan has bought since July. The Neutrality Act would of course prevent such purchases, although it would allow Japan to continue buying steel, iron, cotton, and phosphates to convert into munitions.

EMILY TAFT DOUGLAS

Chicago, January 20

Intuitive or Scientific?

Dear Sirs: Please let me express my sincere thanks to Mr. Vivas for his civilized review of my "Attitudes Toward History" in *The Nation* of December 25. I think that, within the limits of space at his command, he very accurately represented both my interests and my encumbrances.

But I should like to say a few words about the passage in which Mr. Vivas writes: "Burke's approach to symbolism is not susceptible of verification, and depends for its convincing force on his ability to make the reader perceive immediately the author's intuitions. This is to say that the method is essentially a-scientific if not unscientific."

It is my contention, through "Permanence and Change" and "Attitudes Toward History," and a third book on which I am now engaged, that we have

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mistakenly labeled as "scientific" those works which attempt to borrow the perspectives of biology, mechanics, or physics and transplant them to the analysis of social phenomena. I contend that social relations can be adequately interpreted not by physicalist or naturalistic terms but only by terms that treat experience as an "art," hence drawing upon the vocabularies of rhetoric, dramatic criticism, etc., ("men as poets, or at least as poetasters"—which I take to be more relevant than the "scientific" perspectives upon human life got from the description of machines or billiard balls or salivating dogs).

Usually, those "scientists" who selected naturalistic metaphors in which to interpret men earned themselves the honored name of scientist without ever having taken the trouble to offer any description or critique of their basic interpretative structure. In my own case, I explicitly describe the nature of perspective in general, explicitly make my choice of perspective, explicitly give my reasons for choosing it, and through three books explicitly give examples of its application, its scope, and relevancy. Yet all this is but "intuitive," whereas the boys who don't bother to make explicit the processes of interpretation they implicitly use are "scientific"?

My point is, in sum, this: I take social relations to be essentially dramatic in nature. I thus take a discussion of them to be very much like dramatic criticism, and as such, requiring neither more nor less of the "intuitive," and neither more nor less of the "scientific," than one customarily and necessarily gets in dramatic criticism. (I was happy, for instance, to be able at one point to cite an "intuition" by Joseph Wood Krutch in support of one of my own "intuitions.") I willingly agree that many of my speculations will require greater precision. In particular, I must attempt supporting them or modifying them when I find them unsupportable in their present form, in the light of explicit objections. But in attempting a first rounding-out of my perspective, I cannot foresee what all these objections on the part of critics will be.

To me, "scientific" procedure is simply this: The writer thinks he has gone from A to B; the critic shows that the writer has actually made a jump from A to E; the writer must then attempt to show that intermediate steps, B, C, and D, can be offered, as a rationalizing test. I doubt whether a distinction between the "intuitive" and the "scientific" will adequately locate this matter, since the new "scientific" steps, B-C-D, must themselves be "intuitively" selected.

KENNETH BURKE

New York, January 4

Clairvoyance and Chance

Dear Sirs: In reviewing J. B. Rhine's "New Frontiers of the Mind," in *The Nation* of November 27, G. S. Anders states that he, the reviewer, appears to be conservative, his skepticism being based on instinct, while Dr. Rhine appeals to experience. That the skeptic in regard to parapsychic facts is not only conservative but invariably unscientific has been shown by Dr. Walter Prince in "The Enchanted Boundary." Dr. Prince demonstrated that parapsychic evidence is never fairly and squarely faced by the skeptic.

In the use of the E.S.P. (extra-sensory perception) cards, chance should give an average of 5 correct guesses. Obviously chance results vary, but Mr. Anders seems unaware that its possible range may be determined by actual experiment, and that such control experiments have been made, by the writer and others. Mr. Anders slyly remarks that some of Rhine's subjects strike a higher average than 5, "guessing 6 cards out of 25." He neglects to inform us that a typical subject has obtained such successive scores as 14, 16, 17, 21, 19, 19, 19, 13, 15, 16, 17, 23, giving an average of 17.4; and that the highest number chance has accounted for in the same number of trials, in the control experiments, is 6.4. He remarks that in "hundreds of thousands of experiments" 25 successive correct guesses were scored on 3 occasions. If he cares to risk disturbing his skepticism, he can make hundreds of thousands of control experiments—by simply playing one shuffled pack against another—and perhaps on 3 occasions his control pack may score as many as 6 consecutive correct "guesses." Mine has scored no higher than 5. Eileen Garrett, a professional medium accustomed to demonstrating at least telepathy or clairvoyance in purported "communications from the dead," is uninterested in tests with playing cards, yet she scored an average of 13.4 in 625 trials. Chance, in 500 trials, has scored in my control experiments no higher than 5.8.

Mr. Anders is apparently entirely unfamiliar with what has been done in parapsychic research in the last fifty-five years. He describes a type of test which he considers more severe than the Rhine card tests, one success in which would represent, to him, a tremendously powerful proof. And he seems unaware that exactly such tests have been made, with not merely one success but success after success, many times as much proof as he asks for. He will find such experiments described, for example, in Oliver's "The Extension of Consciousness" and Tischner's "Telepathy and Clairvoyance."

GEORGE R. WEAVER

Brooklyn, N. Y., January 5

CONTRIBUTORS

MARQUIS CHILDS, Washington correspondent of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch,* is the author of "Sweden: The Middle Way."

T. A. BISSON, who returned from northern China a few weeks ago, is the Foreign Policy Association's Far Eastern expert.

LANGSTON HUGHES, the well-known poet, has just come back from Spain.

LANGDON POST recently resigned as chairman of the New York City Housing Authority.

EDMUND WILSON, formerly literary editor of the *New Republic,* is the author of "Travels in Two Democracies."

EUNICE CLARK will have some of her poems in the forthcoming Modern Library anthology of modern poetry.

LOUISE BOGAN, poetry critic of the *New Yorker,* has just published a book of verse, "The Sleeping Fury."

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